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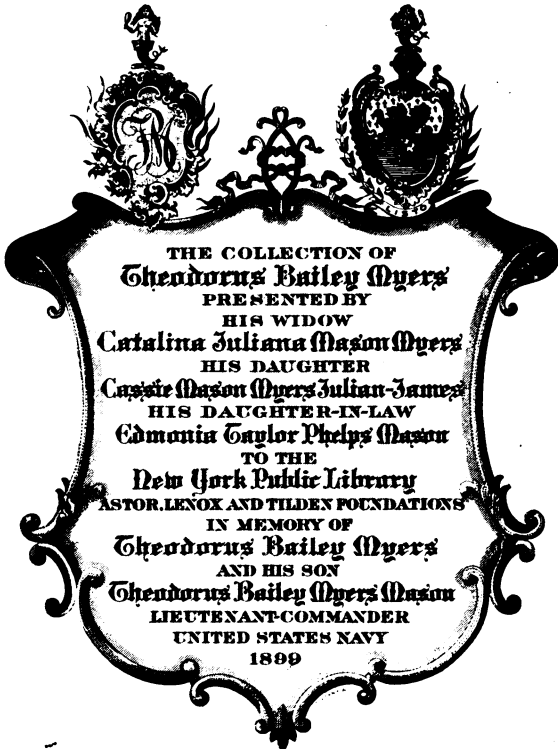
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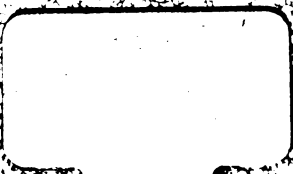
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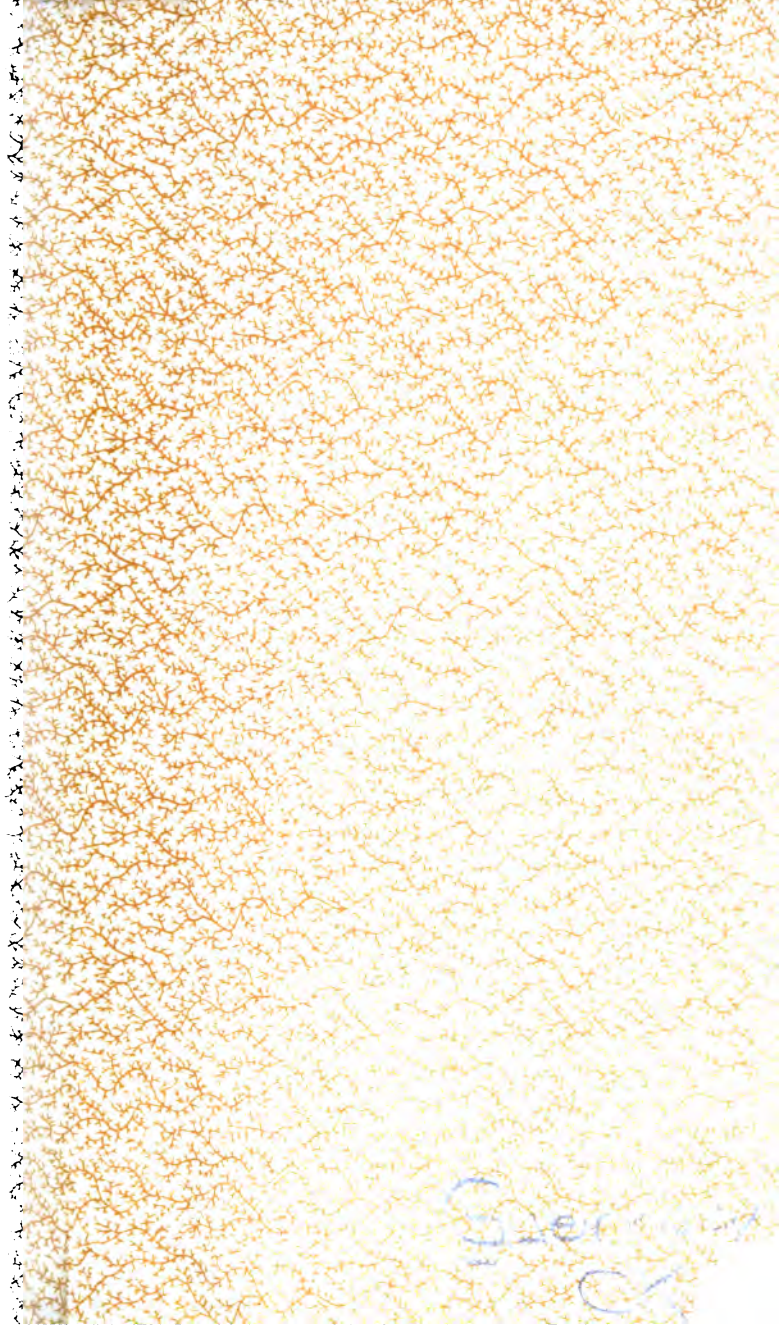


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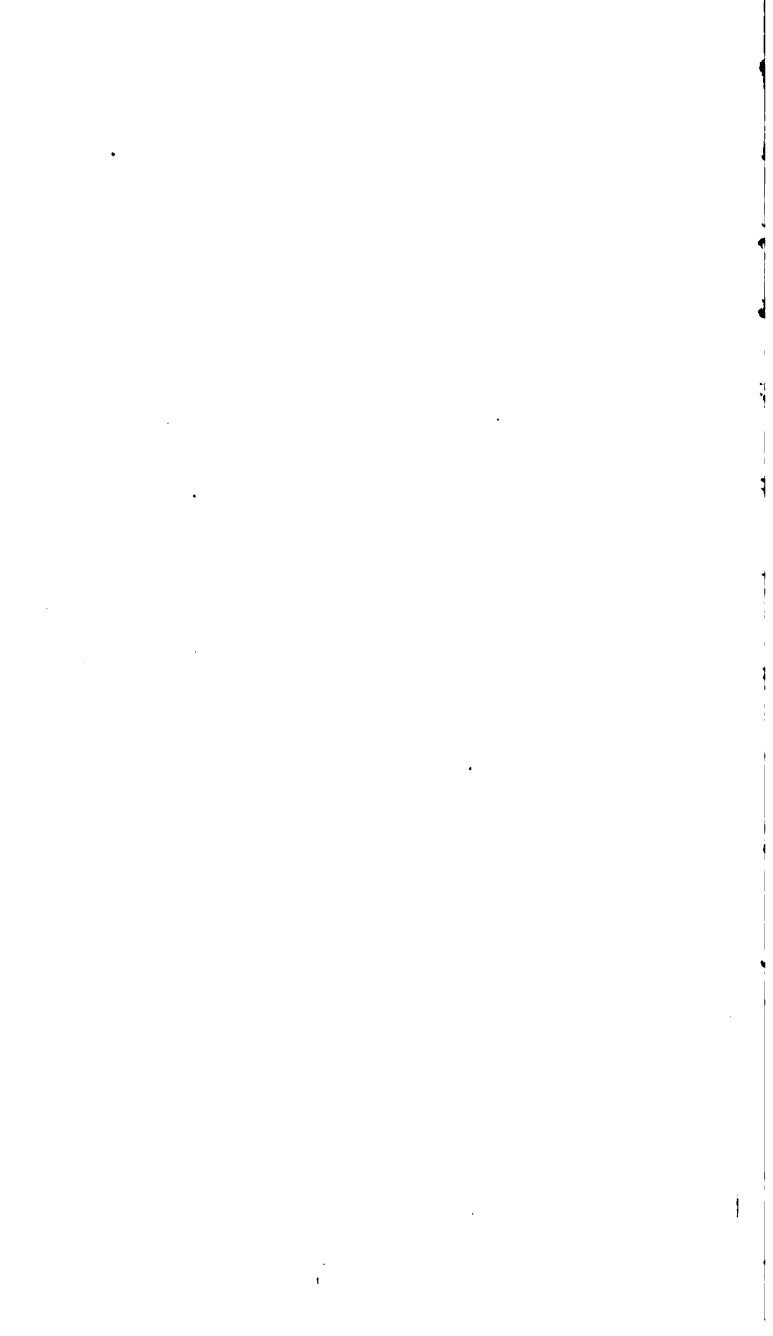


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AND HIS SON
Theodorus Bailey Myers Mason
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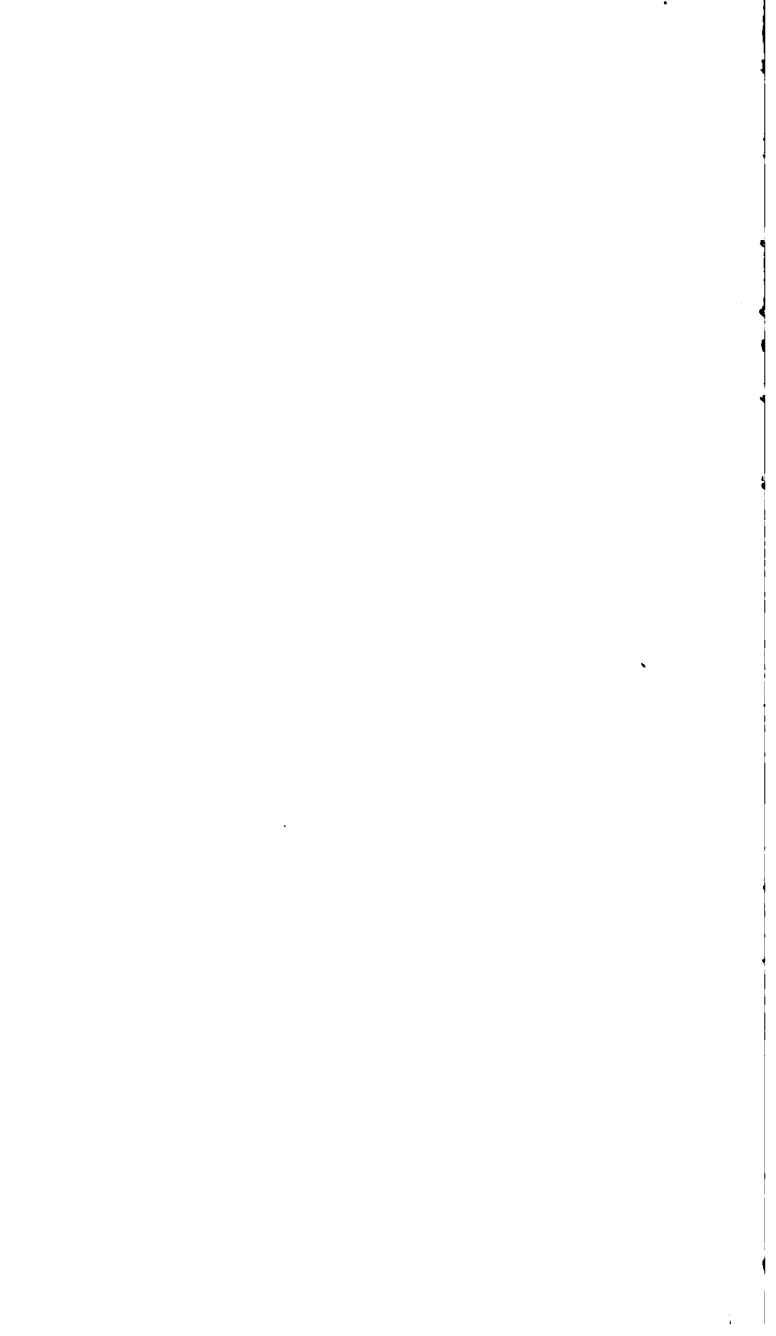




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**DEATH-BED
CONFESSIONS**

OF THE LATE

COUNTESS OF GUERNSEY, page 10

TO

LADY ANNE HAMILTON,

DEVELOPING A SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS TRANSACTIONS CONNECTED
WITH THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGES IN THE KINGDOM :

To which are added,

THE QUEEN'S LAST LETTER TO THE KING,

Written a few days before her majesty's death,

AND OTHER

AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

I am the viper that has been secretly wounding you both.
Vide the Countess's Narrative.

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE FIRST LONDON EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES E. MOORE;

J. HARDING, PRINTER.

1822.

3117.

IN the English copy the initials only of the names appear—for the convenience of the American reader they are inserted in full.



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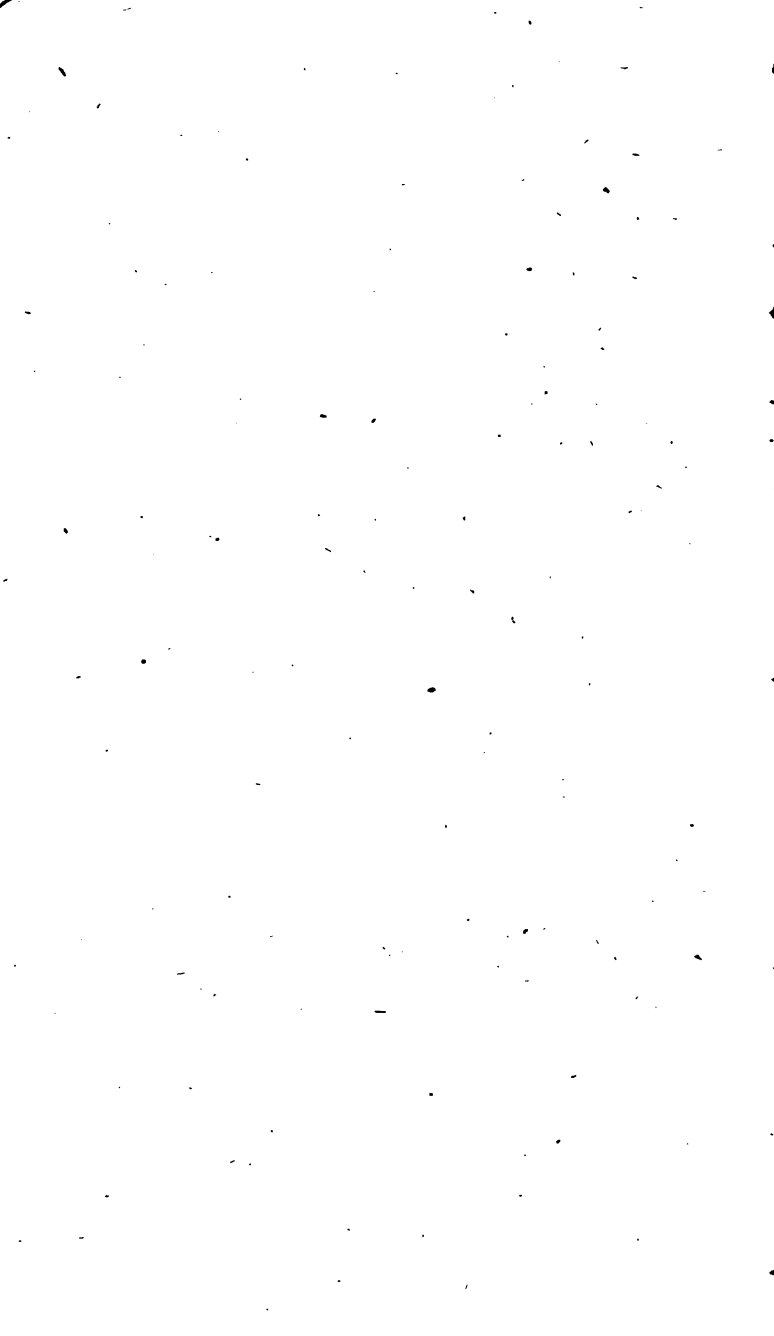
THE interest attached to those mysterious transactions, which involved the life of an illustrious female in the most trying difficulties, which caused her to roam, an exile from the land in which she should have enjoyed regal dignities, and that, ultimately, broke her noble heart, and laid her in a premature grave, has not yet passed away. The more they are developed, their importance must increase; and the more that truth is hidden for a time, like persecuted virtue, the more glorious will be its splendour and its triumph, when suffered to emerge from the clouds that en-

veloped it. The declarations of the death-bed are generally allowed to possess veracity;—it is then that pomp and ambition lose their power; and it is in the solemn moments of approaching fate, that the conscience-stricken mind attempts to make some feeble amends for the load of injuries it has heaped upon the head of the innocent.

Among the number of those individuals, who appear to have voluntarily contributed to embitter the life of the late royal victim, was, according to her own acknowledgment, the late countess of GUERNSEY. On her death-bed, this lady drew up a narrative of the share she had borne in the intrigues which were attended with such fatal results; and it will be admitted, on perusal, that none of the publications, which have yet appeared, relative to the causes of the queen's sufferings, have thrown so much light on those mysterious transactions as the following "Confessions" of the penitent countess, who was herself

a companion and attendant of the illustrious female she confesses to have betrayed.

The narrative is written with fidelity and minuteness, and strikingly evinces the power of conscience to inflict an awful retribution for guilt, even on the minds of those who revel amidst the luxuries of a court, and are blessed with the most envied gifts of fortune.



DEATH-BED

CONFESSIONS, &c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

THE important document which we are about to introduce to the public, teems with matter of such vital interest to the most exalted personages, elucidating a series of transactions hitherto either veiled in obscurity or represented through the medium of blind and erring prejudice, that it will be naturally asked—how it came into our possession? To this we are bound to reply, that, at present, *the seal of secrecy is on our lips!* more we dare not say; but we feel assured that, to the mind of the attentive reader, no circumstance can possibly operate against the *authenticity* and genuineness of the following “*CONFESSIONS.*” We shall, therefore, briefly observe, that the substance of them is most decidedly

correct, having been communicated by the party to whom alone these facts were disclosed by the dying countess. It was her last wish that they should be made known to the illustrious lady concerned: and their truth, and the melancholy event of their arriving too late at Brandenburg House for the purposes of justice, and, perhaps, for the arresting the progress of the royal victim's fatal malady, are matters quite notorious in that circle, wherein alone they have as yet transpired.* It would be well DID THEY ADMIT OF CONTRADICTION; but while the reader is earnestly assured that it is only from a matter of delicacy that parties and authorities are not more explicitly named, the editor has to regret that he can challenge, with a sigh, THE REFUTATION OF A SINGLE FACT contained in the "CONFESSIONS" of the unamiable and unfortunate countess of *Guernsey*.

Deeply, however, as it is to be regretted that

* Although the party who has entrusted the manuscript to our care has permitted us to make known the *cause* that prevented its being delivered at Brandenburg House in time, we decline doing so, feeling assured that, though it might gratify idle curiosity, there is *no* necessity for involving a single individual in trouble, which an exposure of that circumstance would, in all probability, be the means of.

the development of the crafty and mysterious transactions detailed in these "CONFESSIONS" did not take place earlier, yet it must be highly gratifying to every lover of truth and justice, truly consolatory to those who cherish the memory of HER whose noble soul sought refuge from a world of woe in the mansions of heaven, and the delight of every Briton whose heart beats with love for his sovereign, that these "Confessions" tend to place *the real character and conduct of two most illustrious personages* in a far more amiable point of view than the friends of party would desire; for they will not fail to perceive that the basest passions that ever influenced the human breast were in constant action to excite in noble minds unjust suspicion and malignant jealousy; and to mar the happiness of two beings of the most exalted rank and the highest attainments, who were bound by every tie, human and divine, to be the solace and delight of each other.



CONFESSIONS, &c.

TO THE

HONOURABLE LADY ANNE HAMILTON.

IN my retirement from a world, which I have seen enough of to despise, I feel an anxious desire to repair the injury I did to a certain exalted lady, and know no better mode to disclose my sentiments to your ladyship, who as the friend of slandered innocence, will, I am sure, find a pleasure in reading the following true, but humiliating statement.

This will be delivered to your hands by Mr. S——, but not till after my death. Pity my errors, and publish them, only so far as may be necessary for the peace of her whom I have so deeply injured! Tell her she is amply avenged, and that my tortured soul has often envied her calm enjoyment.

* * * * *

It is now useless, dear lady Anne, to speak of those youthful days when the neglect of every thing serious, and the pursuit of frivolous amusements, laid the foundation of a life of misery; but as, when you read this, it will be to you as

the voice of my departed spirit, (for alas ! I feel that my tide of life is ebbing,) I will acknowledge, that, bending before the shrine of vanity, flattery was my greatest enemy—the one before which every good resolution yielded ;—yet, surely, to love the prince must have been a pardonable offence ! he who was ever so engaging, so handsome, so irresistible ! he who, at the time of which I speak, was blooming in the vigour of manhood, extolled by his own sex, admired, I might say adored, by ours ;—who would not have felt proud when distinguished by his favoured attention ? My heart beat high when he retired from the adulation of the court, to recruit his spirits in a lively conversation with me, and was pleased to call those his happiest moments ! Who would not have dreaded a rival in such a bosom ? My lord *Guernsey* loved him, and was himself pleased with his selection of me as his friend ; his royal mother insisted on my filling a place in the family circle, and said George was dull whenever indisposition, or other unavoidable circumstances, caused my absence. Yet it was in this high society I learned to be artful, and that I became an adept in the science of intrigue. I joined with the young ones in deceiving the king, who was averse to every

expensive pleasure, and delighted in the quiet and innocent employments of domestic life. I have been informed that, during the first fifteen years after his marriage, he spent the hours he could spare from business in reading to the queen; improving her in the English language, and all things fitting her station; and, by way of a temporary relaxation, I know that he occasionally employed himself in the exercise of some mechanical work. His majesty never missed an opportunity of conversing with men from whom he had any probability of gaining information respecting the general state of society, with a view to any benefit that might be derived by the country over which he presided from such communication. The evening diversions were music and cards, the latter was admitted to prevent the queen's *ennui*. As the children grew up, these innocent recreations were declined by degrees; a musical party was always formed, which usually ceased at ten o'clock, or soon after; it being his majesty's constant practice to rise before six, on which account he quitted the family circle early; the queen usually left the room with him, but soon returned: The young people then began to enjoy their ease; for with the exception of A—— and her youngest brother, who were

very attentive to their father, the others were reserved in his presence. Though the old gentleman encouraged their confidence, by his good humour and willingness to enter into their youthful sallies, his kind-heartedness received a continual check, so that he became sensible of it; and, seeing they considered his presence a restraint on their cheerfulness, he no longer enjoyed the society of his family, but retired earlier, and, when with them, was less talkative than formerly.

At that time I was young, and too much engaged in the amusements around me to regret the king's absence; I speak of the year 1787. About that period, we lost for a short time, the ornament of our society—the all-accomplished and graceful prince of Wales: conjectures were vague and various; some said “the prince had taken an excursion to the coast, having accompanied a friend on his return to France.” I felt not a little proud that I had been admitted a party to the secret of his being gone to take a peep at Paris; but this the Parisians were not intended to know, his object being just to look at their then beautiful queen, and to play one game with her at *rouleaux*, under the incognito of an English nobleman; as, also, to satisfy himself

whether the fashionable Mademoiselle de Salle was as pleasing as Fanny; and to try the affections of the fascinating widow Fitzherbert, who was then in Paris, and about whom his head had wandered ever since he met her at her uncle's. His absence did not exceed fifteen days;* his return home was hailed, by his mother and young friends, as a joyful event;—to me, however, it became less so, when I heard that the widow had returned with him. At first, I endeavoured to think it a mere flirtation—an ephemeral passion, for well I knew the susceptibility of his heart! and, as long as I enjoyed his friendship, feared not the flatterers of a day! But rumour soon told a tale which the prince did not contradict even to me, “That Mrs. Fitzherbert met him at Calais, where they were united according to the forms of the Romish church.” The relatives of the lady whispered this every where; while the prince's intimates pledged themselves to negative the fact. Meantime, two houses at Brighton were fitted up in an accom-

* This minute recapitulation of events, many of them of a nature somewhat trivial for the purposes of what may be called a death-bed letter, will not appear out of character, or extraordinary, to those who knew the singular habits and mode of thinking that always characterised the writer.

modating style, so as to admit an intercourse by a private passage. The lady assumed a great degree of stately *hauteur*, refusing access to many of her former acquaintance, and all within her mansion bore the mark of royalty. No one acknowledged, yet every one treated, Mrs. Fitzherbert as consort to the prince, and their domestic happiness was the general topic, which, however, I was little inclined to credit, the prince being equally ardent in his pleasurable pursuits, and equally warm in our private interviews! That he lived with the lady on a different footing to the usual style of a mistress was apparent; and the circumstance being related to his father, the latter was so hurt at the statement that it materially affected his spirits. The bare suspicion (for he never ascertained the matter satisfactorily) that his son should have acted contrary to the laws of succession, so preyed upon his mind, that, with other family disturbances, it produced a violent paroxysm of a disorder which was near proving fatal to his life.

Mrs. Fitzherbert continued the serious friend of the prince, and was gratified to the extent of her wishes. Pride being her prevailing passion, appearances were, to her, every thing; the soft emotions of the heart she was ever a stranger to.

The queen noticed her, as did several of the family; the old lady pretended to believe that Mrs. Fitzherbert kept steady the affections of her favourite son—but here she tied a bandage over her eyes, from a wish not to see.

The state of society was then very gay. Mrs. H—t, a leader of fashionable diversions, opened her house to the great world :—here, the beautiful duchess of D^{essonsville} shone unrivalled; the lovely Mrs. D—ff, with the lively duchess of St. Albans, the prince, with his fair friend, Fitzherbert, and S—; in short, all the distinguished characters of the day played their various parts: and masked assemblies, so favourable to the lovers of intrigue, were frequented by all the beau-monde. After sharing the delights of this *coterie*, though not always with unalloyed pleasure, I usually finished the day at the palace.

In the then state of things the king began to feel uneasiness regarding the succession: the pleasing expectations in which he indulged at the union of his second son had vanished, on hearing that Frederick was as regular in his visits to Mrs. C—y as before his marriage; the good old gentleman remonstrated with him on the subject, bringing forward (in the way of example) his own conduct with regard to lady

Charlotte L——, towards whom he had felt a great attachment, founded on her amiable qualities, and which he effectually conquered. The expostulation was heard, but not heeded. In 1794 his majesty was convinced that the duke lived in a state of separation from his wife, though not on grounds of personal discord; the duchess being truly amiable in manners, but afflicted with nervous complaints, which rendered any hopes of a family fruitless;—no wonder then, that the king should feel anxious to see his eldest son settled: to this step, also, the first minister was a strenuous adviser—and the parliament, being urged at that time to pay the prince's debts, made it a condition that he should take a wife. This was a measure that made me determine on a plan at which I now shudder.

The story of the prince's marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert had gained universal credit, notwithstanding the assertions of his friends to the contrary: Pitt, a staunch protestant, dreaded the influence possessed by Mrs. Fitzherbert, it being well understood they lived in great domestic comfort; and though she had never proved *enceinte* by either of her former husbands, and that the present alliance was null in every point of law, yet the birth of a child would have been

regarded as an event likely to produce very fatal consequences ; particularly as at that time, (doubtless to please Mrs. Fitzherbert) the prince showed a strong partiality towards the body of Catholics even so as to raise their hopes to the attainment of emancipation at no distant period. This apprehension being exaggerated by the ministers in their statement to the king, he resolved to make any sacrifice to prevent it. In the early part of that year, he had repeated interviews with the prince respecting his marriage with some royal foreigner, the interests of whose family might assimilate with his own in religion and general politics. Not but that the king felt delicately for Mrs. Fitzherbert's situation ; and both he and the queen honoured her with their private approbation ; at the same time he could not conscientiously, countenance so conspicuous an example in his son, as the living in open violation of the laws, which it was no less his interest than his duty to practise and defend.

Never had I thought the prince so captivating, as at the moment when he informed me of his determination to comply with the request. "My debts will be paid," said his royal highness, "and I shall please my father." "Who," I asked, "is to be the happy lady?"—"That is

of little consequence," he replied; "I hope she will not be so unreasonable as to expect me to love her!"—"She will have a RIGHT to love you," I exclaimed; "THAT, *alone*, is sufficient to make any woman happy!" "One thing I am resolved upon," said the prince, "not to wed my mother's neice; because, knowing it will be out of my power to pay her more attention than outward appearance may require, I will not wound the queen's feelings by slighting her relative; nor will I subject myself to be teased into hatred towards one, who, if she act wisely, will have a just claim to my respect and esteem. A neice on my father's side will suit me better, for he, being much engaged with state affairs, will have fewer opportunities for observation, as well as less time to listen to the retailers of scandal."

I then begged I might have the honour of attending the lady, as it would give me, I said, the means of sometimes adding to the comfort of both. I certainly did not, at that time, contemplate the dreadful consequences which might happen, but I felt that my motive had much of selfishness in it, as I knew that, by such occupation, I should have it in my power to direct, in some degree, their affections. We talked much of the bride elect: Frederick had seen his cousin, during a

visit he made at her father's court, and reported her manners to be extremely engaging, her disposition lively, and that the uncommon ingenuousness of her heart laid her most secret thoughts open to every observer. "She will be quite an exotic here," he continued; "now, she is the artless child of nature; but when she has studied our code of etiquette, under the direction of a clever Englishwoman, she will become one of our brightest ornaments; for she possesses much good sense, which now floats on the surface of an unsullied mind." Here I interrupted Frederick's eulogium, to observe, that "I had always understood the court of Brunswick to be the most free and licentious of any on the continent." "With justice it is so considered," replied the duke, "but her mother has taken care to keep her daughter uncontaminated by bad example! and, indeed, a volatile disposition, such as Caroline's, is too much engaged by the variety of its own ideas, to rest long on exterior objects. Her mornings are employed in study; her evenings, in the society and amusements of young persons of her own age; and I cannot help thinking the mind is more innocently occupied when playing at *hunt the slipper* or *forfeits*, than in listening to the scandal of tea-table chat, or attending to

the cold formalities of the people, whose looks, while complimenting each other, convey to an intelligent mind, that their hearts are corroded with envy, malice, and all kinds of uncharitableness." Oh! thought I, we shall have lectures on behaviour, from this paragon of moral perfection; but, as I hope to have a good deal of the management, I shall take care her *naivete* does not supersede that courtly spirit, which, by keeping us in outward order, gives us a cloak to private indulgence.

Whenever I had any grand object to attain, it was my constant practice to apply at the fountain-head; so that morning I took my work to the queen's apartment, for she loved to see us industrious; and having told her majesty I did not feel very well, and came to crave her permission to pass an hour there, as her conversation always operated as a cordial to my spirits, I was most graciously ordered to be seated. At first, I kept to common topics; until, by degrees, I arrived, through a winding path, to the comforts of matrimony; and, finding the theme not unpleasant, I said, "English wives are indebted to your majesty for their felicity; your domestic happiness has become fashionable: long may it please God to spare us the example! for much, I fear, the

loss of your majesty would not only be severely felt by us whose personal knowledge has taught us to revere and love you with filial affection, but our children would experience the most woeful effects from a change, and morality itself would totter to its foundation." "You do not surely suppose my son would countenance vice?" her majesty eagerly inquired. "Too well I know the prince's bosom is the seat of virtue!" I as eagerly replied; "but to give a great and general example, it is not merely necessary that a king should practice goodness himself, much depends upon his consort; experience has lately shown us how little the former can effect, without the concurrence of the latter. Who could practice virtue more rigorously than the late king of France? yet, the influence of his unfortunate partner has proved the proneness of human nature to copy vice—and has evinced the great importance to a state of mutual piety in the king and his consort. One cannot contemplate, without shuddering, the dreadful consequences of a licentious court; for such we must, however, unwillingly, acknowledge was the distinguished character of the infatuated followers of Marie Antoinette!"

"My dear lady *Guernsey*," said the queen,

“to whom do you allude? you alarm my fears; the correctness of your ideas has gifted you with a foresight I am unacquainted with; I have often profited by your friendly and judicious hints; whisper your present apprehension—you shall not repent your confidence.”

“Pardon me,” I hesitatingly exclaimed, as I covered my eyes with my handkerchief, “my anxiety for the happiness of our beloved prince rendered me incautious; a dread lest his amiable disposition should meet one that is uncongenial in this expected union, led me to anticipate the fatal consequences which might result to future generations; and I have unburdened my thoughts where I ought to have concealed them.” “Have you, then, heard any thing particular of the princess it is intended my son should espouse?” asked her majesty. “Only, that she is an exception to the usual manners of the court in which she has been educated, and in which she is described to shine as a paragon of perfection,” I replied: “this intelligence coming, too, from so good a judge as your majesty’s second son, ought to have silenced every fear; but my spirits are greatly depressed; I am unusually thoughtful to-day; whoever, like myself, has experienced the happiness enjoyed by my family, in the condescending

affability of a queen, that is the admiration of all Europe for her virtue and the chaste manners of her court, must, naturally, shrink at the remotest prospect of a change—a change which I hope not to live to see !”

“ You, lady *Guernsey*, of all the females I have the pleasure to call my friends, are the one I would, by choice, select, as the adviser and directress of the princess on her arrival in this country. Can you, do you think, give up your time to this charitable purpose! Caroline’s mother never was a favourite with me; she has her brother’s failings, without his virtues, and is much too tame for her station. Could you believe that she has suffered the duke’s mistresses to sit at her table? She writes as an excuse, that she admitted them for peace sake, and never allowed her daughter’s presence on those occasions:—it was purchasing peace much too dearly! she ought rather to have been turned out of doors than have allowed such scandalous proceedings.”

———A message from her daughter Elizabeth, who was very seriously indisposed, interrupted our *tete-a-tete*; but her majesty did not leave the room without having first obtained a promise, that, if the earl would consent, I should hold myself in readiness to attend on the expect-

ed stranger. I spoke of *maternal duties*, as the only impediment to my ready acquiescence in any measure which might in the least conduce to the happiness of any branch of her family. I guessed this sort of excuse would best prove my fitness for the office, as well as increase the queen's desire to engage me.

After quitting the royal presence, I felt not a little pleased at my prospect of acquiring, what, to me, was the most desirable thing in the world—to lead the affections of the princess of Wales in such a manner as to secure her husband for myself! To accomplish this, it was necessary I should deceive the lord of my bosom, which, from habit, was now become rather an easy task. Every one has a hobby, which, at times, his friends are glad to borrow. Lord *Guernsey* would have sacrificed all he possessed for the honour of being styled “friend to the king;” I had only, therefore, in this case, to place the words *benefit, advantage, honour, credit, popular opinion, loyalty and expediency*, in the best points of view to obtain my end; which I did so effectually, as to bring him to be exactly of my mind—a thing not very usual with married people.

In the month of December, lord M——— secured the treaty, by acting proxy for the prince,

and, in the beginning of 1795, a squadron was prepared to conduct the bride-elect to England. I excused myself from accompanying the expedition, thinking it best to stay and receive the queen's personal directions concerning her new daughter—I also wished to give all the consolation in my power to the expectant bridegroom, with whom I had certain plans to arrange.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, the nation undertook to sooth, in the way most congenial to her feelings—an addition to her income. From childhood, money, and a certain style of living, were the desired objects of her choice; and she was happy in acquiring them, even beyond her sanguine expectation; inheriting from her father the slender sum of one thousand pounds, she depended on a delicate complexion, and a pair of blue eyes, to do the rest. Vanity found an entrance into the pious and retired education of a convent, and her school-fellows prophesied her longing spirit would not rest until she acquired exalted rank. Without one iota of the tender passion, which, when felt in the extreme, forms excuses for a thousand follies, she became successively the wife of two gentlemen of large fortunes, and of respectable families; who, by their generous liberality, left her a handsome jointure, that enabled her to

support her rank in society; but, as the inclination to please did not cease with the life of Mr. Fitzherbert, she acquired the name of the *fascinating widow*.:—attracted by this distinction, the prince wished to see her, and an appointment was made for the introduction to take place at her uncle's; on that occasion she speculated so far as to risk seven hundred guineas on a lace train, which she had lined with lilac, as the most becoming colour to her complexion:—more fortunate than many, her speculation answered! I shall now leave this lady to enjoy her jointures, and annuity, her royal liveries, and princely friends, as long as she can.

I did not, as your ladyship knows, proceed to Germany, but met the princess and suite at Greenwich. Our first interview took place at the governor's house. I certainly eyed her very narrowly, and thought her highness paid more attention to commodore P—— than was quite necessary: she spoke English in the German style, like the old queen, and her manners seemed to me, as far removed from courtly rules as one can well imagine. I could not find fault with her person—her face contained some pleasing expression, but it had too much of nature in it; she seemed not to take the trouble of disguising a thought, or even of clothing it in the most de-

licate garb, to be selected according to the usage of every person of fashion—and I exclaimed, mentally, “how will the elegant George receive this rude, unpolished piece of sculpture !”

The thought instantly occurred to me, that I would pretend to mollify, in some degree, the disappointment he was doomed to receive; I therefore begged leave to withdraw soon after breakfast, under pretence of preparing for the princess; it being understood I had brought dresses from London, and wanted to point out which would be most proper. I then stole a few minutes to address the queen, informing her, “the stranger was deficient of those delicate attractions the prince knew so well how to select, and to prize, and begged to assure her majesty, I took this method to acquaint the most amiable of men, that he must not rest on outward appearances, but give credit for the inward graces of the mind, which I hoped acquaintance would bring to light, in the female who had the honour to be selected as the partner of the prince, and to succeed (I hoped at a very distant period) the most revered and virtuous queen in the world !”

This note I sent off immediately, for I considered the importance of first impressions, and knew the intelligence would be communicated by

the mother to her son, and would insure that sort of reception for the stranger which I wished her to receive—and I had the pleasure to find, as I was present at the family introduction, that my plan succeeded. Certainly the king looked all satisfaction on that occasion; but a glance, transferred from the countenance of the princess to me, directed by the queen, accompanied with a raising of the shoulders, expressed her majesty's grief on the first interview, and the kind of sympathetic anticipation she felt for her beloved George.

My heart exulted in the general sneer I read on the faces of the girls, except Elizabeth, who had it not in her disposition to give pain to any human being. The bridegroom was the last to make his appearance in the family circle; and, spite of my endeavours, I was chagrined to perceive more of tender pity than the disgust which I had expected to see depicted on his features. All eyes were fixed on the prince, when, with more than his usual elegance of manner, he bent towards the stranger, and raised her hand to his lips. I saw her eyes beam upon him, as on her protector, to whom she was going to confide her future destinies:—the look pierced my very soul; the fiend Revenge bounded in my bosom—and I

secretly vowed, that no earthly power should rob me of the object I loved to distraction! and of whose heart, until that moment, I never doubted myself to be the mistress. I dared not fix my regards upon him; but, assuming a smile quite foreign to my feelings, I tried to attract the queen's attention, lest she might also be inclined to compassionate the being, on whom her son lavished his kindhearted notice: her uncle felt too happy within himself to apprehend uneasiness in any one, so that I had nought to fear from his penetration. Besides the pleasure of seeing his niece, the king had various inquiries to make concerning his sister; towards whom he preserved a strong affection. I was impatient for the conclusion of this interview, which broke up to prepare for the royal nuptials. I superintended the arrangements of the bride, who really looked pleasing, even in *my* jaundiced eye. Determined to rob her features of their happy expression, I dismissed the attendants, under pretence of giving her highness a respite for recollection, and availed myself of the leisure moments to add rouge to her before highly-coloured cheek; for it was the natural look of ease and health that she possessed of which I aimed to deprive her. As I made this unbecoming addi-

tion, I observed to her, "that Mrs. Fitzherbert was fair, and the prince always wished her not to be sparing of rouge:" she eagerly asked "Who is Mrs. Fitzherbert?" I hesitated, looked foolish, and begged her to excuse my inadvertency, in having mentioned one whose name I ought particularly to have avoided; and declared, the interest I felt to render her appearance as lovely as possible, had made me forgetful of other matters;—she persisted to inquire, and I to make excuses; urged at length by her entreaties, I knelt before her, and, with convulsive sobs, that I could well assume, besought her not to name my offence to the prince, who would never forgive my incautious conduct, in speaking of a person who, certainly, *had seemed to share his affections*, but whom there was no longer any cause to suspect; she having consented to remain retired and unnoticed. "Does any engagement bind the prince to that lady?" asked the princess. "Excuse me," I replied, "that I cannot answer that question now—on some future day I promise to disclose all." "On your honour, promise!" said the princess. "Solemnly I do!" was my answer: "but your highness is disturbed—I cannot forgive myself—let me entreat your highness will take something

to recruit your spirits." "A little cyder will suffice," said the princess; "the voyage has made me thirsty." I rang—an attendant entered; I ordered some cyder, as also some brandy, and mixing some of the latter with some cyder, assured the princess it would prove particularly refreshing after her journey. No sooner had her highness swallowed the overpowering beverage, than a message was brought that the ceremony waited her appearance, and she hastened to join the family who had assembled in the closet.

Never shall I forgive myself the mortification I had prepared for her—even at that time my heart reproached me, when I saw her bold and unbecoming manner, as she tottered towards her uncle. He, good man! fancied it was girlish agitation, whilst every other person beheld, with astonishment, the dauntless expression of her eye: fired with secret anger, and strengthened by the potent draught which the demon of mischief had impelled me to administer—no timid fears caused a retiring glance; on the contrary, her look penetrated every countenance—but I alone could read her thoughts! I saw that her mind was absorbed in elucidating the doubtful secret, and that she was employed in seeking the object of her emotion in every face. Unconscious.

of her actions, and forgetful even of the approaching ceremony, until reminded, the procession had formed for entering the royal chapel. The duke of Clarence having led her to her seat, the prince came next, looking manly, handsome, and graceful. When each person had taken his allotted place, the marriage ceremony commenced; the bridegroom's agitation was apparent to all; he was so little himself, that he arose too soon, which occasioned a pause, but the king whispered something to his son, who resumed his kneeling posture. Possibly no one could better account for this absence of thought than myself: I saw him look aghast when he first perceived his consort's altered and strange appearance, and pleased myself, as he gave the bridal kiss, to think, how he would revolt from lips that my arts had so recently sullied!

That night, the marchioness of T——, lady C——n, lady C——, and myself, attended the princess to her chamber: I saw her anxiety to question me, which their presence prevented; she certainly did not exhibit any pleasing expectation when we took our leave. On passing the prince's dressing-room, I met the faithful Troop, carrying wine to his master; the man shook his head significantly, as if to say,

“He should have done without this to night;” whilst I, mentally exclaimed, “I envy them not, for, well I know, that few approach the nuptial bed with less prospect of happiness!” Sure some evil spirit directed me that day, or I could not have devised so diabolical a plan; but my mind was bent on the ruin of the princess, and, after a night of inward agony, I arose with new resolution to effect it.

Knowing the king’s habit of rising early, I walked before breakfast to B——m house, and, going to the queen’s apartment, tapped at the door; Sch——g opened it, and invited me in; I said, that, fearful of not having an opportunity, during the day, I came thus early, to inquire how her majesty had borne the fatigue of yesterday. “My good lady *Guernsey*,” said the queen, “this is kind; for heaven’s sake, tell me, what you think of the stranger? Mary declares she never beheld such an awkward looking creature; and we all deplore the fate of our poor George; his father is the only person who seems blind to the strangeness of her manner?” “I dare not utter my fears,” I replied, “but, when she has recovered the fatigue of her voyage, the princess will be more herself; she will not then be troubled with *thirst*, as she is at pre-

sent." "I see," exclaimed the queen, "really I thought she staggered at the altar.—How dreadfully shocking! what had she taken?" "The princess insisted on mixing brandy with her cyder," I replied: "indeed, she poured it out herself, or I should have been more careful." "This is monstrous! George must be informed of her vile practice." "Permit me to request your majesty's forbearance, in this instance," I said, "the like may never occur again," "Promise," resumed the queen, "if it should, that you will acquaint me." "I shall conceive it my duty so to do," I answered, and excused my longer stay, under pretext that the princess might want me. On my return to Carlton house, all was still in the anti-room. The criminal passion I had admitted in my bosom burned within me, and I lamented having accepted a situation, which compelled me to witness the estrangement of the only heart I had ever prized. Agitated with hope and fear, as well as other stronger sensations, I retired to a dressing-room, the door of which stood half open, and threw myself on a sofa, exclaiming, as I did so, "George, I exist but in your presence; if my love must be sacrificed to this coarse, untutored woman, I will yield my life also; since I could not live a single

day chilled by your indifference." At that moment an arm encircled my waist. Alarmed, lest it might be my lord *Guernsey*, and that he had heard my complaint, I was near fainting, when the most soothing accents lulled every fear: it was the prince himself—he closed the door and a conversation followed, the most interesting I had ever held. I gathered, in general terms, that I had nothing to fear from my rival; some half-uttered sentences implied disappointment, nay, a sentiment still stronger, disgust! Elated at the half-owned truth, my gratitude became unbounded as my love, and exulting in the confidence I had shared, I quitted the prince, to answer the bell which summoned me to attend his consort. I entered her apartment with a cheerful countenance, and ventured to inquire "if her royal highness felt well and happy?" The princess answered, with an air of lassitude, "I own to you, my friend, I am not as comfortable as I expected." "Nature is very perverse," I observed, "for I can assure you, every female envies your royal highness. "I cannot see any reason;" replied the princess. "Are you not the future queen of England—allied to the best, most accomplished, and elegant of men!" The princess, smiling, answered,

“I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with the prince to pronounce him the best—I will give him credit for all the manners and accomplishments which a man can possess; but, with regard to *make*, or *form*, as you call it, I have known many as elegant, or more so; there is Mr. M——, for example, to go no further.” Now, in these observations, as experience has since analyzed them, there was nothing improper; the smile was good-humoured, and void of any lurking ill; yet, did my prejudiced mind give it a diabolical meaning; and, at that moment, I resolved to twist and use each word as might hereafter answer my maddened purpose. Soon as breakfast was over, I attended the bride to Windsor, and a second, and a third night, had the mortification to see the prince retire to her chamber. No longer able to endure this appearance of harmony, I depended on my influence with the prince to procure a separation of beds; so, on the morning, when we were about to return to London, I contrived to meet the prince in his dressing-room. I had purposely taken off my rouge, and, with an air of langour, which was partly affected and partly real, I approached his royal highness, to inform him of my intention to remain a short time at Windsor. “I gave myself

credit," said I, "for a greater portion of fortitude than I possess; I cannot endure to be an eye-witness of your royal highness' happiness with one so every way unworthy her exaltation; had the princess been as amiable as you are deserving, I hope, and believe, I could have witnessed your highness' felicity, if not with pleasure—with patient forbearance—but, now, it is painful, in the extreme, to perceive, so much worth and goodness lavished on a person who, by nature, is insensible to the blessing." "I think, with you, she is cold;" replied the prince. "No, no!" I observed, "NOT COLD; where inclination leads, she can be lavish of her love!" "I conjure you, by the friendship that has existed so long between us?" said the prince, "by that passion with which you have inspired me! say all you know—conceal nothing from me." "Pardon me, your royal highness' and impute it to my sincere affection, that I have penetrated so deep into the recesses of her heart. I may err in thinking as I do, and, for the future, will be more cautious in unbosoming my thoughts; I will no more dwell on words, but will wait until facts shall warrant my speech." "*Guernsey*," said the prince, "I believe you love me—not to think it, would be worse than death, so entirely

am I yours! and I tell you, there is nothing in Caroline to excite affection—her actions, and her manner, are unfeminine; her language coarse, and her whole person needs the aid of English habits to render it even agreeable.....and, much I fear, it will never acquire the style of fascination, which alone has charms for me! Nevertheless, as a stranger, she claims my protection; and I have been considering how I can best fulfil the engagement I have entered into, without enslaving myself; for, though the chain that binds us has not been assumed from choice, I feel, as she has been selected for my partner, and will one day fill the station of queen of these realms, that much is due to her from the nation and from myself. The people show every disposition to perform their part, and I am no less willing to make some sacrifices to perform mine;—I am only puzzled so to act, as to render Caroline comfortable, without infringing too largely on my own pleasures; outward appearances must be respected: now you, my lovely friend! can assist me in these arrangements; and first, we will devise a plan by which our mutual intercourse may be secured.”

Piqued at the considerate manner in which the prince had spoken of his consort, in the first mo-

ment of irritation, I made this rash reply :—“ To please each party, I beg your highness’s permission that I may remain in this retirement ; where, in the attendance on your excellent mother, I shall run no risk of hearing your name traduced by unfavourable comparisons with any man ; painful as your absence will be, it will not be accompanied by the bitter regret of seeing your love abused.”

“ Have I a rival in Caroline’s affections ? ” asked the prince.

“ Surely, I have not betrayed the princess ! ” said I, fearfully.

“ You have done only a part of your duty, said the prince, ” “ and I trust you need no stronger motive than *my love* to complete the work, by naming the person who has dared to supersede me in her affections.”

My refusal, dear lady Anne, was vain ; so, after a struggle, which the eloquence of love overpowered, I related her words : “ That she had *known* several more elegant in form than his royal highness, particularly Mr. M.” and I took care to lay such emphasis on the word *known*, as should leave on his mind the strongest and most unfavourable impression.

“ Enough ! ” said the enraged prince, “ I swear

to renounce, from this hour, all further intimacy with one so hardened in vice, so depraved by habit."

I became alarmed for the consequences I might draw upon *myself*; I soothed, solicited, and, on my knees, besought his forgiveness; protesting my sorrow for having repeated what my love, perhaps, had exaggerated into criminality. At length, I obtained his promise that, for my sake, he would bury the cause of his conduct within his own breast:—this he pledged his honour to observe, and I firmly believe he has maintained his word inviolate. With regard to his future behaviour, the prince was equally determined to confine his attention to outward form, saying, "She shall reside under the same roof, and share my protection and civility, so long as she acts in a manner to deserve them."

On our return to Carlton house, the newly-married pair maintained a sort of cool politeness towards each other. At the hour of rest they retired, as usual, to their dressing-rooms. When the bride had undressed, the prince led her within the door of her chamber; then saying, he felt indisposed, he kissed her hand, and wished her "Good night." I watched the countenance of each: that of the prince evinced a delicate kind

of sorrow; the princess was evidently mortified—her pride dictated acquiescence; she returned the wish without a question or a word of complaint. When the same ceremony had been frequently repeated, the princess, one night, observed to me, that English husbands had very singular notions. “It is much the practice on the continent,” said her royal highness, “for married people to have separate beds, and a very pleasant custom I think it is; but then their sleeping-rooms join; here, I find, the husband sleeps at a distance: at least, I suppose so, as I have not received a nightly visit since the third evening of our marriage.”

“It is well known,” said I, “among the prince’s friends, that he never passed a night with Mrs. Fitzherbert: their private intercourse was not confined to time, but was at the call of inclination; the best mode, I think, to keep the flame of love alive.” “Apropos, *Guernsey*,” said the princess, “you promised me some particulars respecting that lady; I wish you would now communicate them.” “I shall obey your highness’ commands,” I replied, “but, hope to be excused the relation now; for it is a long story, and my lord might wonder at my delay.” “Your apology is so good,” said the princess, “I ac-

cept it with pleasure. I would not, for a moment, be the cause of disappointment to you and your lord's happiness; therefore, good night." As she uttered the last sentence, her highness sighed heavily, and looked so sad, that it brought reproach to my mind. O! how would her wish have changed, had the princess known it was the prince who waited for me!

This reflection damped the pleasure with which I usually went to his apartment; then, my heart was capable of compassion,—it has since become as callous as flint. Had I, at that time, followed its dictates, the anguish of this moment would have been spared me! the bitter acknowledgment that I was the first to envenom the prince's mind with base, malignant stories, false as they were diabolical! that I acted the part of a spy over his inclinations, to keep under, and turn aside, the tide of his feelings, as they floated on his naturally kind and well-intentioned heart; that I so imposed upon his goodness, as to convert his disposition, which, in its original source, was benevolent and humane, into * * * *

* * * * All this haunts my guilty soul, and makes me odious to myself; but the deed is done! His character * * * * * and she, who was gifted with the means

of diffusing happiness around her, is a persecuted, suffering mortal! and what am I? I dare not pursue inquiry, lest madness seize the little memory that remains, and so deprive me of the only reparation in a guilty wretch's power—to own this was *my* work!!! * * * The separate beds at Carlton house, as soon as the circumstance was known, became a subject of uneasiness to the king; he expostulated with his son, who entered no farther into the matter, than to assure his father it was mutually agreeable to himself and his consort; and the old gentleman learning, soon after, that his daughter and niece was in that state in which “all wives wish to be, who love their lords,” contented himself with merely advising his son against indulging with other females, concluding that, after the *accouchement*, all would return to the right system. In one part of his father's injunction I perfectly coincided; and, to prevent the prince's ranging in the sweets of variety, I kept him as much as possible to myself; but here I did not always succeed: his visits to Mrs. Fitzherbert were more frequent than I judged necessary; but, as his delicacy made him still consider it right to continue his clandestine attention to her, it appeared a fit occasion for me to communicate the nature of the

prince's engagement in that quarter; which I took an opportunity of doing, under a promise, on the part of the princess, never to divulge that the communication was made by me. I declared my motive to be entirely devoted to her highness; but that if the prince knew it, I should be considered, by him, as a spy upon his actions; in that case, I should be required to resign my greatest happiness,—the being allowed to attend upon her person; in which pleasing duty, I hoped to have sometimes the opportunity of evincing my sincere and grateful attachment to her royal highness. In relating the narrative, I took care to inform the princess, that *her* marriage was not a voluntary act on the part of the prince, but a task imposed upon him by the people; who were instigated to make this condition through the apprehension of the ministers, who hoped, by this means, to wean him from his catholic connexions; for they looked with dread on the partiality the prince professed towards that class, through his attachment to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who followed the Romish doctrine, in strict conformity to its tenets, keeping in her house a chaplain of her own persuasion, who was often admitted in the social circle of the prince.

The princess received the intelligence with an

hauteur of spirit for which she was remarkable, and which gave her the appearance, to those not well acquainted with her, of want of feeling; but which rather proceeded from that greatness of soul, that for centuries had characterized the Brunswick race. From that period, Mrs. Fitzherbert was frequently the subject of our discourse, when we were together.

The prince continued to notice his consort; but even the ceremony of doing so was performed in a careless manner,—more as a duty he owed the public than out of any desire to oblige his wife. An incident, which occurred that autumn, increased his coolness, and confirmed the queen her implacable enemy.

It happened, that the Rev. Mr. Randolph had business at Berlin, and waited on the princess, to ask if she would honour him with any commands. The princess thinking this an excellent opportunity to send to her father's court, had a personal interview with Mr. Randolph, when she requested him to deliver a packet into the hands of her mother, and particularized other commissions, all which he promised to execute punctually. Mrs. Randolph was then at Bath, in a delicate state of health; as soon as her husband had left her, the disorder took an alarming

turn, her life was in imminent danger, and an express was hurried after her husband, which reached him on the coast, just as he was about to embark. It may be easily conceived that Mr. Randolph's thoughts were absorbed in his wife's situation. Anxious to behold again the object of his affection, he determined to relinquish his intended journey, and to retrace his steps, with all possible speed, to Bath; but, even at that moment, the packet intrusted to him by the princess was a principal object of his care; and, to prevent the possibility of giving that lady uneasiness, he went through London, for the purpose of calling at Carlton house. It happened, however, on his arrival there, that her royal highness was absent from town: he enclosed the packet, therefore, and directed it "*to the particular care of the lady in waiting upon the princess of Wales,*" and left it, with a strong injunction, to the porter, that it might be forwarded next morning. I was the lady in waiting; and finding on taking off the cover, that it contained a parcel for the duchess of Brunswick, I informed the queen; and, anticipating how far her curiosity might lead, when urged by my insinuations, I showed the packet, remarking, at the same time, "it might contain a journal, by its size." Her majesty asked if the

princess kept a journal? I said, "it was her highness' custom to write her daily observations. The packet lay upon the table;—its superscription, "*to be given to the duchess of Brunswick from her daughter,*" was a strong inducement. "Doubtless," observed the queen, as she took up the parcel, "an insight into this would set all our opinions right."

"It would enable us to deal justly towards EVERY BODY," I replied, "and seems to be put purposely in the way. I do suppose it a duty, on the part of your majesty, to ascertain the truth; and, certainly, an occasion, such as Providence has here provided, may not happen again."

"Open it!" said the queen. Never did I obey any command with so much alacrity, and my joy seemed complete, when I perceived several pages of the journal which I had been in the habit of seeing the princess write. It began with her entrance on board the royal yacht, and was written in bad French, mixed with some English phrases. To any unprejudiced person, this packet would have afforded real amusement—the style was sensible, lively, and interspersed with many ingenious sallies of the writer, who expressed, with great justness, her conception of the English character; and, on the whole, conveyed

a vein of satire, truly entertaining. She described the manners of the ladies, who were sent to conduct her, with provoking accuracy; and spoke of the polite attentions of the commodore and the captain, in terms, which I endeavoured to construe into more than mere affability; assigning meanings that I well knew were not intended: but the introduction to her husband's family was best of all delineated; and some events of the wedding-night were stated with admirable talent, though with great good humour, containing some particulars, told, indeed, with delicacy, but which were only fit for a mother's eye.

The queen, raising her hands, exclaimed, "I am shocked! what, my friend, can be done for George." When the family was described, the princess had drawn each with such accuracy, that it was impossible to make a mistake. "To begin," said her royal highness, "with this unparalleled, virtuous family! among whom my good uncle is certainly misplaced, since he is benevolent, considerate, and virtuous, with a heart just like your own, so I shall put him up, *on the shelf*, as the people here say, but not in their acceptance of the term, which implies one unfit for service; but, that he is beyond all comparison with them. I shall, therefore, pass on to my *snuffy* aunt."—

“Monstrous!” exclaimed the queen, “me vow she is right wicked.”

I own, I trembled for what might follow; and was almost sorry, when I found her satire attacked only the foibles of her husband’s family, and would have passed, with well-intentioned persons, for mere playfulness; but we were not disposed to consider it in that light. Her majesty conceived herself grossly insulted, as though she had been accounted the worst of criminals. Elizabeth’s taste for *fun and porter*, with Mary’s *prying curiosity*, and for which her cousin styled her “*peeping Polly*,” so roused her anger, that she seemed inclined to expose the whole to the prince; but the acme of her majesty’s rage was reserved for the line in which the princess, describing the men’s dress, on coming to the high collar, observed, “most fashions here originate in the convenience of the GREAT, to hide their *natural defects*.” No longer able to bear, what she conceived to be an intended insult, the queen seized the packet, and hastened with it to the king.

Uncertain to what extent royal fury might go, I ventured after her; but I should need the genius of Hogarth, to describe the scene which followed—I shall not, therefore, attempt it. Her

majesty uttered her invectives in such bad English, and in so hurried a manner, that it was next to impossible to understand her, and the king was at a loss to guess the meaning of all this bustle, until, seeing the superscription of the packet, he said, "Fie, fie, Charley! is this your mode of protecting a stranger? what an example do you set, in opening private communications—read not another word—but let *Guernsey* re-seal the packet, and get her to make the best apology she can." "I will keep it," returned the queen, "that I may force her to confess her shame." The storm now threatened on the part of the king; so seeing a contest was about to ensue, I thought it prudent to retire, and watch for her majesty, as she passed to her own apartment.

Whilst waiting, I considered upon the best mode of concluding this unfortunate incident: and it appearing to me, that to expose this packet to the prince would cause a quarrel, and that her royal highness's present situation would immediately procure a reconciliation, I thought it would better suit my plan not to allow the discovery to be made; but rather to keep the secret in reserve, since it might serve the purpose of irritation, whenever I wanted something to rouse the prince's feelings; so, when her majesty

returned, I curbed my impatience to speak, until I had first heard her opinion.

“The king,” said her majesty, “with his usual perverse way of reasoning, has made me promise to return these papers, without seeming to know their contents; his silly fondness for his niece keeps him blind to her conduct, but I will find the way to punish her—I shall certainly perform *my duty*, in cautioning my son; and you *Guernsey*, must contrive a way to enclose the letters as they were before—but how can we obtain the seal? for I see, that even in that, she has acted with her usual imprudence—would any other female, having the honour to be princess of Wales, seal a letter with a simple olive-branch? it shows the woman’s meanness.”

“I will answer for getting the identical seal,” said I, “I am a prodigious favourite with Sander, and she will obtain it for me.” I then retired with the packet, but before I closed it, I copied all that related to the royal family.

From that day, the family intercourse became less and less frequent; they met only when etiquette made it needful; and then the queen and her daughters (with the exception of Elizabeth) omitted no opportunity to mortify the princess’s feelings: the latter affected not to understand

their insinuations ; she always appeared in high spirits, when in their company, and generally amused herself with asking the females to join her in a game at ' hunt the slipper,' or some other frivolous diversion, to which she knew they were averse, and at which she had, in fact no wish to play herself, as she was then very near to her confinement ; but her great spirits prompted her to sport with nature. Had she been fortunate enough to have had a good and gentle friend near her, to advise and counsel her against these playful sallies, it would have been well ; but it was her misfortune not to have such a friend. In many points the princess was masculine ; her health and spirits were good, and being naturally noble, frank, and generous, she felt herself elevated by the approaching prospect ; for, although slighted at that moment, she felt that she was about to give birth to the future heir to all their boasted power, and trusted to that epoch, as the means of reconciling her in the affections of her husband, and giving her consequence in the eyes of his family and the nation ; and her spirits rose as she approached nearer the moment which was to realize this fond expectation ! This elevation of mind prevented her seeing the coolness of her husband's relatives ;

whilst they considered her cheerfulness as proceeding from extreme thoughtlessness; thus, deceived and deceiving, each regarded the other with a mortal indifference, which was daily growing into hate in the one party, and disgust in the other.

Little apparent alteration took place, until the birth of a daughter brought the family arrangements to a sort of crisis. This much-looked-for event was attended with some unpropitious circumstances:—that it was not a son, was a source of disappointment to the prince, but that being a point which human foresight had neither power to direct, or decide, he was induced to bear it with tolerable patience—but, that the birth should have occurred a day sooner than the usual calculation admits, was variously handled, according to the interest, or accidental opinions of the persons who discussed it. The prince, who is thought a good judge in some female cases, silenced the kind gentlemen who were disposed to advise, by saying, “he did not wish them to trouble themselves with the subject;” but his conduct evinced a different opinion; for he ordered an additional private staircase to be erected, leading to the nursery, by which means he

avoided the disagreeable dilemma of sometimes meeting the child.

Notwithstanding the calumnious insinuations of the queen, who protested, "She should have been inconsolable, had such a suspicious circumstance happened to her," the princess seemed to have acquired a new claim on her husband, and I saw, with jealous malignity, that, in two months after the great event, he increased his attentions towards her; often, and I thought purposely made his visit at the hour he knew the infant would be present, in whose smiles he took a lively and parental interest. Fearful these appearances might lead to a reconciliation, I deemed it politic to re-peruse the contents of the packet, which had now lain a long time untouched. When, the next time, I met the prince alone, he asked me, "What I thought of little Charlotte?" I replied, "I think her the most fortunate of children!" "In what respect?" he asked.—"Because she has the most indulgent father and grandfather in the world," said I; and continued, "no one can witness your increasing fondness, without admiring your extreme kind-heartedness." "Who do you think her like?" said the prince. "I conceive the child bears some small resemblance to her mo-

ther," I replied ; "but few persons are inclined to see that." "What is the general opinion?" inquired the prince. "My regard for your royal highness does not allow me to repeat unpleasant things ; therefore, I request your permission to change the subject." Here, as I expected, I was interrupted, and urged by the most endearing entreaties, until, in half uttered sentences, I conveyed more to the prince's mind than an exposure of the packet could have done ; and took care, during the following days, not to allow his royal highness leisure for reflection, as I met him, seemingly by accident, when he retired from the family circle. Knowing his heart was well inclined to listen to his consort's exculpation, I considered the interim, in which his ideas wavered *pro* and *con*, a most important crisis, and resolved to secure it my own. For this purpose, I held counsel with the queen, whose mind was more bent on the continued separation than even mine.

We conversed on the negligence which, for some time back, had been shown to Mrs. Fitzherbert ; and, thinking I should please her majesty by forwarding a reconciliation in that quarter, I represented her temporary absence, as the effect of delicacy giving place to public feeling,

the better to answer my purpose. I pretended to have received a communication from lady M—— L——, who mentioned having a letter from Mrs. Fitzherbert, from the other side of the water, and in which she acknowledged the motive of her journey in the following passage;—

“I do, and ever shall, consider myself the lawful wife of the prince; I am convinced he thinks the same, and that his excellent father and mother (whom all the world allow to be the most pious and amiable that wear a regal crown!) are of the same opinion. I am well aware that the late marriage was in compliance with the will of the nation; therefore, from a consideration of public benefit, which often operates against individual interest, I will absent myself awhile, not to be in the way of those feelings, which must be sacrificed to female delicacy; as, certainly, the exalted stranger will require some time for explanation: When she knows how each party is situated, doubtless, she will herself invite my return; well satisfied with holding the prerogative of royalty, whilst I enjoy the supreme felicity of conjugal affection; mine, by the most sacred tie! the duties of which shall never intrude on the rights annexed to her high station.” “Who,” said I, “can

help admiring such sentiments! here, the most tender conscience may see the forbearance, the noble feeling, by which a wife is enabled to resign the outward appendages of rank, for the mild and unobtruding practice of social duty."

With arguments such as these, I reconciled the queen's conscience with her inclinations—and with others, quite as convincing, to the prince, I succeeded in chasing the tender sentiments which had latterly lurked in his bosom for the princess. Though still living under the same roof, they seldom met; the habit of cold indifference they had hitherto carried towards each other had now grown into visible dislike, which the princess, from the ingenuousness natural to her disposition, first showed she had discovered.

That the prince and his royal partner had laid aside the wish to please each other, was apparent to every one;—that their forced interviews were accompanied with mutually painful sensations, was certain, to those who had the power of observing them. These reflections formed the ground of my excuse for counselling her majesty (who honoured me with her full confidence) to encourage her son in the renewal of his connexion with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and I prepared *his* mind to receive this advice, by frequently

speaking to him on the subject, and describing the sensations of that lady, as I pretended they were stated by her friend; for to me she was not half so formidable a rival as the princess, because Mrs. Fitzherbert possessed not any share of that susceptibility which is irresistible when displayed to a man of feeling: but there was in the princess a noble frankness, which, united with greatness of soul, and a kindly nature, would have been all-powerful in its operation; and I was aware, if these qualities were allowed scope for action, they would, in time, excite the prince to more manly conduct, and plant in his bosom a mean opinion of the families, who had been, from childhood, his favoured companions. * * * * *

Here a weight of reprobation preyed on my spirits for my guilty conduct at that period—doubly guilty! from the false friendships I assumed, as a cloak to my infamous designs; for I now acknowledge, with sorrow, that I brought on an attempt at explanation from the princess, who, moved by the most honourable sentiments, frankly declared, that it was better for married persons to separate formally, than to meet only for the purpose of irritating each other. This conduct, on her part, was interpreted, by my in-

situation, as proceeding from a sensual affection for these rites, from the enjoyment of which she had been so long debarred ; and gave rise to that memorable letter of the 30th of April, 1796. I need not dwell on the result of that epistle ; every one knows it was followed by the dismissal of wife and child. But every one does not know what sacrifices this proceeding cost the parties. The prince suffered the greatest uneasiness, which I endeavoured to tranquillize, by fabricating scandalous stories about his consort, and assuming increased tenderness towards his person ; then, finding these efforts insufficient, I had recourse to a more powerful auxiliary, and induced the queen to use her influence in bringing back Mrs. Fitzherbert. The prince grew ill : this did more than the most persuasive arguments : the lady returned ; and, with her presence, the prince's peace came also.

During the term of nearly ten years, did the princess stand the test of severe scrutiny, before her enemies succeeded in any serious cause of accusation. Many were the battles I then fought with my conscience ; I often admired her magnanimity in so bravely meeting the repeated injuries which succeeded each other as quickly as the inventive genius of her enemies could create

them.—It was the dread I felt, lest her conduct should obtain a reconciliation with her husband, that induced me to lend myself as the instigator of what afterwards went by the name of “The devil’s plot.” To this I was urged by a confession made by the prince, “that, in a tipsy frolic, he had passed a night on the Heath;—had slept in his consort’s chamber, and, in contradiction to the sentiments expressed by himself in 1796, had infringed on his voluntary terms of perpetual separation.” On the credit of the old adage, that drunken men and children speak truth, I concluded this visit was one of inclination; and when the prince owned having made a promise to revisit the Heath, I thought it right to use every means of prevention. I began by rousing the fears of his mother, who had immediate recourse to lord M——, whom her majesty knew to be her son’s confidential friend, and the repository of all his secrets! in return for which honour, lord M—— submitted to lose his money, looking always to an appointment in the East as an equivalent: this convenient compact bound them friends; and the queen, wisely guessing that the cause of her son’s aversion to the princess had been imparted to his friend, suggested to the latter the suspicions she had long entertained—and

he, comprehending the heinousness of deceiving majesty, engaged the brothers to prevent the prince's promised visit, by devising amusement elsewhere, that drew him to a distance from the Heath.

Meanwhile inquiry was set on foot among the princess's household, which, by means of douceurs, proved pretty successful; for, from the epoch of the boy, William Austin's admission into the family, lady Douglas and myself had made him the groundwork of a plot, which it was our intention to play off at a proper opportunity. In this, I must confess, lady Douglas was the complete dupe, at which I felt no kind of sorrow, as I owed her a grudge on an occasion which I shall here mention.

When lady Douglas appeared, for the first time, with a title at the drawing-room, the prince, who never omitted an opportunity to say a civil thing, paid some frivolous compliment on the valour of sir John, at Acre, which she imagined was spoken for the purpose of admiring her beauty. Prepossessed with a notion that the prince admired her, she, one day, in passing the princess of Wales, curtesied with a sort of impertinent sneer, that said, "I am a favourite." The princess, who was never backward in pene-

trating the thoughts of others, knew how to interpret this behaviour. "I see," said her royal highness, as she was one day conversing with me, "lady Douglas has a great inclination to conceive herself of sufficient importance to become my enemy; I will punish her vanity by affecting to notice her friend, sir Sidney, for I have discovered that she is in love with him." "May it not turn out a dangerous experiment?" I asked the princess. "I shall know where to stop," her royal highness replied; and effectively she lost no time in commencing her plan. When she next dined at lady Douglas's, she paid the most marked civility to sir Sidney. The princess called him to a chair next her own, allowed him to serve her with fruit, and, on quitting the house, told sir John and his lady, she hoped they would not visit her unaccompanied by their friend; and afterwards sir Sidney waited on the princess, at a general invitation. The success of any playful frolic always caused the princess to be in excellent spirits. I never observed her manner so pleasantly cheerful as during the period that sir Sidney made one of the dinner circle, which happened at least twice in the week. About this time William Austin became an inmate of the household; prior

to his arrival, lady Douglas had assumed an extreme affection for the princess, though to me, in whom she placed confidence, she acknowledged herself an enemy; and the malignant expression of her countenance, whilst making the strongest protestations of regard, discovered to such a keen observer as her royal highness the deep-rooted hatred with which she was endeavouring to probe the secrets of her heart. The princess told me of it, and that lady Douglas had introduced the subject of her and sir John's attachment to sir Sidney, for the purpose of hearing in what terms she would speak of the hero. "I equalled her in cunning," said the princess; "I made her believe me to be in love with him, and left her ready to burst with spleen at the idea that he loves me to desperation.—I will make her mad before I have done with her, for I will dress Sander, and give her the key of the shrubbery-gate. I saw lady Douglas look very significantly when sir Sidney mentioned his intention to stay some days in London—she fancies he will remain that time concealed in this neighbourhood, for the purpose of carrying on an improper intercourse with me. You know there is a stranger (a poor deranged gentleman, they say,) come to reside in the white cottage; Sander

shall enter the private gate from that direction, wrapped in my travelling cloak, and lady Douglas, whom I know will be on the watch, will transform every moving figure into sir Sidney, and will think herself secure in stating my guilt. Should she dare so far, I will expose her malice in telling the whole truth—the scorpion of jealousy shall sting her to the quick for her wicked dissimulation.”

“This would, indeed, be excellent,” I observed, “could your royal highness be certain of the sequel; but is it not possible that calumny may succeed in spreading her rumour to your injury, before your royal highness has an opportunity to refute her testimony?”

“Entertain no fears on my account,” said the princess, “so well am I convinced of lady Douglas’s improper attachment for sir Sidney, that I have it in my power to make her retract, by a single word, spoken in the hearing of sir John.”

When things were in this state, I called upon lady Douglas, and, having insinuated to her the princess’s fondness for the gallant sailor, had the pleasure to hear her acknowledge, under the mask of a friendly intention, (very commonly assumed on such occasions,) that the princess had *almost* confessed her guilt. “I doubt not,”

continued her ladyship, "that, before sir Sidney's return, I shall be in full possession of the fact. I wish," she added, "that her royal highness would not make me her confidant; it will be the most distressing thing in the world, conscientious as I feel in my duty to my sovereign and his amiable family! you know it would be impossible for sir John to conceal such an important circumstance, and it would be doubly guilty in me, who am doatingly fond of my husband, to conceal secrets from him—of such a nature, too! it would be enough to give him a wrong opinion of me; I would not, for the universe, be suspected of an intimacy with a female of such a character."

"I took upon me," said I, "to assure the princess of *your delicacy* on this subject, in a conversation she held with me relating to sir John and his friend."

"Could she entertain any doubt?" hastily interrupted lady Douglas.

"On no surer ground," I replied, "than that certain persons always imagine a very intimate friend of a husband has favourable opportunities with his wife."

"If I could suppose the princess entertained so horrid an opinion of me," exclaimed lady

Douglas, "her high rank should not be any inducement for me to continue her acquaintance; I would instantly relinquish it!"

I found but little difficulty in dissuading her ladyship from a rupture at this crisis, and things went on, apparently, as usual.

On sir Sidney's return to his friends on the Heath, the whole party met at sir John's table. The attachment between the ladies appeared then to have reached its height, each having an object in view; the princess being desirous to mortify her neighbour in the most vulnerable part—her affection for sir Sidney; and lady Douglas was bent on the destruction of the princess. In this humour the ladies met, and then the memorable story of the milk wetting her royal highness's handkerchief, with the fabrication of her approaching accouchement, were personally related by the princess. Of this I do not entertain a doubt, all the particulars having been told me by lady Douglas, and afterwards confirmed by the princess herself, who, ignorant of the imprudence she was committing, thought only of playing, what she termed, a frolic.—I was the most guilty of all; since, in order to punish lady Douglas's hypocrisy, I wrote the anonymous letters to sir John, and enclosed the

offensive caricatures, in which I copied the princess's writing so exactly that it would have been difficult for herself to have detected the fact; these letters brought the intrigue to an issue. Lady Douglas, irritated to excess, repeated all that the princess had told her, to sir John; the latter repeated it to the duke of Sussex; he consulted his brother E-----, and it was resolved to enter on a thorough investigation of the whole matter, and make the result known to the princess. I have reason to think they were deterred, at that time, by learning that the princess had played off some trick on lady Douglas, which information I have always attributed to Sander, as I believe she was the only one, except myself, who was in her royal highness's secrets.—For me, I never divulged the truth until now, that remorse extorts it from me. For nearly two years this business remained unnoticed, only that E----- advised with the princess respecting a more guarded conduct in future, and that the affair was whispered to each one in the family, with the exception of George and his father; but, in two years after that period, when the husband's unexpected visit to the Heath, roused the fears of the enemy, that a reconciliation was to be apprehended, an union of interests induced them to

join in a sort of family compact, to prevent the frustration of their hopes ; and, encouraged by the protestations of sir John and lady Douglas, who offered to attest their depositions on oath, they laid the affair open to the king and queen.

On that occasion, two of the brothers took upon themselves the right of examining the cottage on the Heath, which had, for some years, been the residence of a character unknown ; they went when the owner was absent, and found in one of the sitting-rooms an unfinished likeness of the princess of wales. This, at the time, appeared a mystery, that astounded the finders of the portrait, but which no one tried to penetrate. Her enemies considered it the most favourable occurrence that could have happened ; and, perfectly satisfied with this seeming proof of criminality, immediately entered on the scrutiny I before mentioned ; and a noble earl, who, hitherto, had been considered amiable in manners and disposition, meanly lent himself as the agent of persecution.

Her royal highness, on hearing that doubts were entertained as to the propriety of her conduct, asked for an immediate change of the persons who formed her household, feeling it was incumbent on her not to allow herself the possi-

bility of tampering with her dependants. Had she behaved with equal prudence on all occasions, how admirably she would have acted! It was a remark of doctor Johnson, "that persons of strong sense are apt to perform the ordinary actions of life carelessly; whereas they encounter great events with cautious prudence and wisdom." Such was the case of her royal highness, who stood on the rectitude of her actions and intentions.

They whom the king appointed to investigate the business also acted conscientiously, and satisfied their master there was no real cause for banishing his niece from his presence; but, when the king's intention to appoint an early meeting was made known to his family, her enemies had recourse to their influence with the prince, and succeeded in prevailing with his royal highness to solicit a delay.

On the whole narrative being related to the prince, he declared that he could never regard, as virtuous, a female who wished to appear guilty; and asked my opinion. I replied, "that no woman in her senses would have advanced such a falsity of herself; that either lady Douglas had fabricated the whole story, or that the princess, in a lively mood, had committed her-

self to her friend, and then made up the strange story she imparted to me; but," I observed, "I now speak only my natural sentiments, without the chance of guessing how a person, with feelings so opposite to those I entertain, would act." From that hour the prince's hatred became fixed; even when his counsel, after minute inquiry of each of her enemies, yet wanted proof, and, therefore, could not advise against the princess being received in the family circle, he still remained unmoved,—determined not to sanction her reception, he absented himself from that memorable interview. Meanwhile, the princess continued to act as she had done before, except that she showed a great attachment to the founding William Austin, and an increased contempt for her husband's family,—the natural results of being debarred the company of her daughter, and of being an object of dislike to her deluded husband.

After remaining some years, persecuted, harassed, and unhappy, the unfortunate lady wrote one of the best letters she ever penned to the prince, in which she stated some of the many hardships she had endured, and regretted, in feeling and respectful language, the loss of her daughter's society. The minister, whose office

it was to read all letters to his royal master, observed, when he concluded this, and had laid it aside, "that some mode must be adopted to prevent the prince from being troubled with these interruptions, from one who ought to be satisfied with the permission to retain her title and dignities." Nothing more was said at that time: in a few days, however, a copy of that letter found its way into the daily papers. An interested friend of the princess, who was then treating with ministers for an augmentation of salary, thinking it might answer his purpose, procured the original letter from the secretary's desk, and made this malicious use of it. And *it did answer his purpose*; since, on his taking the paper to his patron, and assuring him he furnished "the intelligence," he obtained the desired appointment, and, from that day, has been an active agent against the princess. Meantime, the prince, who was naturally kind, and possessed a great portion of good sense, had often, when alone, ruminated on the contents of his consort's letter; the more he considered, the more he became convinced of the reasonableness of the arguments it contained; and had actually debated the matter in his mind, by arraiguing the merits of the case before him, and had come to the de-

termination of making some personal inquiries, whether things were, really, as bad as they were represented. This was the subject of his royal highness's meditation, when the same officious adviser, who had read the original letter, appeared with the offensive publication in his hand, which put all disposition to justice to flight, and fanned the smothered embers of revenge into a flame, which all the force of pity could not allay.

The man in office met that day his *confreeres* at —, and, after dinner, amused them with an account of the purloined letter. Exulting in their triumph over an unresisting victim, they agreed to form a league with the lady's friends and advisers; so, under the appearance of friendship, they informed Mr. W — d, that nothing would tend so effectually towards the princess regaining her husband's esteem, as her making a tour to the continent; as, by that means, she would leave her daughter unbiassed with respect to marriage, and free her from many restraints, resulting from the coolness that now existed between her mother and the members of her father's family, which coolness, they said, would wear off by absence, and that, at her royal highness's return, every thing would be on a right footing.

As soon as this proposal was communicated to

the princess of Wales, she entered, very willingly, into the plan, and immediately made her intention known to the ministers, requesting them to inform the prince, who considered this step as a fresh proof of his consort's depravity;—rejoicing, however, that it would for a time, at least, free the country from her presence, he readily consented.

At that period, I was myself smarting under humiliation, being convinced lady Hamilton was my successful rival. Glad to avail myself of a temporary change, I seized a hint, thrown out by the prince, “that a person in France would have a good opportunity of watching a certain lady's conduct,” to say, “I would make a visit to some friends on the continent; from whence I should have it in my power to inform him of what was passing.” Pleased with my offer, the prince repeated a rhapsody of affection, which my heart inclined me to believe; but, thinking it might not seem well in me, as her party were suspicious of me, that I should leave England at the precise time she did, I employed my confidential agent, madame B——, and she placed Louisa Demont in the way of the princess, as a person qualified to answer the double purpose of

obtaining her royal highness's confidence, and betraying it.

I have reason to believe it was the princess's intention to have remained only a short time abroad, with her relatives in Germany; and that the "long journey," as it was afterwards called, was undertaken in consequence of her finding the heads of the continental courts in league with * * * * * against her. "This," exclaimed her royal highness, when one day conversing on the subject with Louisa, who obtained the situation of her dresser, "this is more than I was prepared to meet; yet, this offensive and cruel conduct is the work of christian princes, who preach religion to unenlightened nations, and hold up charity to be a godlike virtue! The heathen practices it better—he only immolates to the presiding power, whom he believes it to be his indispensable duty to please; but christians sacrifice to every passion that agitates the human frame. I will devote myself to two years' absence; surely, in that period, my consort's eyes will be open to the conduct of those wretches who have too long influenced his weak sensibility. Some of my enemies have paid their debt to nature. Alas!" She added, "I myself may have ceased to be an object of persecution!

these things are wisely hidden from us. Be they as they may, I will endeavour to gather knowledge and patience by studying the character and manners of those who live at a distance:—perchance, I may meet with hospitality, where there is no profession of it.”

“Where,” asked the prying Louisa, who had already ingratiated herself into favour, “does your royal highness mean to bend your course?”

“When I have seen the best part of Italy,” said the princess, “I will proceed to Constantinople.”

“Bless me!” exclaimed Louisa, “will your royal highness venture among infidels?”

“Most certainly, it is my intention,” continued her royal highness, “and if you, Louisa, entertain any fears of the climate, or that your beauty dreads a Seraglio, I counsel you to go no farther than you deem yourself safe—I have no fears on my own account.”

In the next letter, Louisa said she had conquered her apprehensions, and was determined to accompany her royal mistress. “Knowing the princess as you do,” said my correspondent, “your ladyship will not be surprised to hear, she has made acquaintance with a courier, who disentangled her train in the gallery at B——,

with a grace that charmed her romantic taste. Inquiries respecting the hero were entered into, which ended satisfactorily: seeing I should anticipate her royal highness's wishes, I mentioned him, the other day, as a fit esquire for the long journey. 'With your royal highness's permission,' I said, 'such a gentleman seems a very necessary part of the suite; he has intrepidity to contend with Turkish valour, and I know a secret, that would remove every cause of scruple, respecting his admission to the honour of your royal highness's society, *that his family is more than respectable.*'—'Explain yourself,' interrupted the princess. 'That it was noble,' I replied, 'before certain valorous deeds, in favour of Buonaparte, rendered the present descendant famed, 'tis true, for courage, but degraded in the eye of monarchy.—I heard Marto say, that he was honoured and loved by men of all degrees.' The bait took—I have perceived my mistress conversing with Bergami in her out-door excursions, and not a few weeks will place him high in her affection. For my part, I wish we were all returned safe to christian quarters, and wonder what can induce the princess to wander among those heathenish Turks. However, I shall go, to prove my gratitude to your good

ladyship, and my willingness to serve the cause of virtue; for, to be sure, as your kind ladyship says, it must be serving her to put trials in her way, so that, if I should be sacrificed by the infidels, I shall fall, as lord Nelson said, 'doing my duty.'

* * * * *

Here was a chasm in our correspondence until the year 1817, when I had another letter, containing numerous instances of what Louisa termed the princess's mean disposition. How, from the moment of her setting out, she desired the persons of her suite to forget the difference of station; that each should exert himself for the amusement of the others, whilst she should endeavour to study the comfort of all, and share, equally, their pleasure and fatigue: "and, sure enough," said Louisa, "the princess kept her word; we were all as one family, and, except sometimes that we slept on straw, and had not sufficiency of what was good to satisfy our appetites, and that the plague was at our door, we were pretty comfortable; and I must own that the princess seemed as happy as any of us.—I thought it prudent, before we sailed for Turkey, to give my humble advice, that her royal highness would allow Bergami to act as her guard.

“I have heard,” said I, “that the Turks are naturally treacherous, and that they always carry arms; should they,” I continued, “be ever induced to use them, (as heathens will do any thing for money,) your royal highness’s attendants would not only suffer the most poignant grief; but might, at their return, be subject to injurious suspicions.” Thus was the princess induced to admit Bergami to *act* as her personal protector. In the next letter, from Como, Louisa informed me that things were no better than before the long journey—that the foreign ambassadors were equally uncivil, and that the house of B——n, in particular, had given unequivocal marks of disrespect—besides, that the ministers at her own home couched their letters in very mysterious terms, and not at all conciliatory. She also mentioned, that her mistress frequently spoke of returning to England, but she hoped her royal highness knew better than to put herself in the way of being called to an account;—for, when two persons slept under the same tent, it was but natural to suppose they must sometimes meet;—in a storm, for example, people think themselves safer for being near each other. —An apprehension of something of this kind prevented my placing my bed by that of the

princess, which her royal highness was anxious for me to do. To be sure, it may be said, that the awning, not being fastened down, was liable to be lifted up by any one; but, who would venture to look into the privacy of a princess!

This letter anticipated my anxious wish; I showed it and talked over its contents with the queen, lady Hamilton, and a few particular friends. We all affected to lament that a person, for whose connexions we felt so strongly, should have so far degraded her friends. About that time, lord M—— and his lady returned from the continent, having been so shocked by reports concerning the princess of Wales, that they said they had left Italy in disgust. They communicated their intelligence to duke W——, and he, *out of brotherly affection*, told it to the prince; the latter, galled to find the honour of his family so grossly impeached, and hoping, he said, to contradict the report, ordered certain persons to investigate the whole affair. Accordingly, Mr. B——^{roughan}, being a shrewd lawyer, competent to discriminate the nature of claims of right between a client in disgrace and a powerful defendant, was thought by the prince's friends a proper man; and, to aid him in the difficult task,

Mr. C—— went also ; but, to conceal the motive, the latter received a sinecure office of ambassador to a court with which, at that time, the English had no communication, so that he had ample leisure to make inquiry. At the end of a few months, both gentlemen returned, freighted with a cargo of intelligence sufficiently doubtful to create suspicion, and short of facts to substantiate what they advanced. Nothing gives such unlimited latitude to opinion, as when the imagination is left to follow its own bias. In this dangerous crisis of the business, I received an unexpected visit from the man of law. No sooner was Mr. B—— announced, than my thoughts reverted to the princess, now styled queen ; the prince of Wales having succeeded to the august station of his deceased father.

This was our first meeting for the space of eleven years ;—after mutual inquiries of each other's health, about which we felt mutually indifferent, Mr. B——, who considers minutes lost that do not bring their share of profits, precluded the business by saying, “ a late death had opened a field of difficulty to our beloved sovereign. As the adviser of his consort, and from a wish to act rightly, I presume,” said the gentleman, “ to consult your ladyship, on the present pro-

ceeding, between his majesty and the queen. You, madam, know the king's unvaried desire to do justice to his cousin ; and you know, better than any other person, what has been her conduct, from her first arrival in this kingdom.—Many criminating circumstances have been proved by those who had access to the lady—all short of the fact of adultery, it is true—now, I will not be so rude as to quote Latin to your ladyship, but our law says” —“ I understand you, sir,” I observed, “ and reason tells us, that the wish to commit a crime constitutes guilt.” —“ Doubtless it does, madam,” continued Mr. B——, “ the king's conscience tells him he ought to have the benefit of this indulgence ; and they now have the subject under their serious consideration ; still a *tender regard* for the lady renders them anxious not to advise to her injury, and desirous to act on a sure foundation. I, myself, have often shuddered at the consequences her conduct might draw upon her, when the question should be put respecting her filling the seat of the late strictly virtuous Charlotte. Yet, with all her eccentricities, the queen has so much innocent playfulness in her manner, that often, during my late visit to her, I was tempted to suppose she was making dupes of us all. Sander,

who, from long knowledge of her royal mistress, gave her tongue more freedom than any other person, once said, in my presence, 'my dear princess is the best creature in the world, and one would think she wants to appear the worst.'

"The confidante is no more. Your ladyship is now the only person in existence, to whom the princess's private intentions were fully known."

"I had rather not be questioned," said I, "for it would hurt me to turn her accuser."

"No one," said Mr. B——, "who is acquainted with the amiable lady *Guernsey*, could ask a thing so unpleasant to her nature—the favour I come to solicit of your ladyship (a favour in which the country is deeply interested) is, that you would inform us, to the best of your knowledge, whether, on the former trial, there were legal cause for the plea of adultery? I presume not, after the usual form of law, to question you, madam, respecting time, place, or person; all those matters may be easily supposed; only your ladyship's opinion, as a highly valued friend, whether the princess was, at that time, guilty of adultery."

"If my answer is to be productive of any consequence, affecting the queen's life, I shall feel most reluctant to give my thoughts utterance."

“Your ladyship need not speak more fully,” the lawyer replied, “nor shall I trouble you, madam, further on this very unpleasant subject. The consequence of your ladyship’s compliance will merely be, that we shall prevent any further exposure. I must be plain in telling your ladyship, that a legal trial might be attended with very unpleasant disclosures of family matters, and end in punishing the guilty. The change in the liturgy must, ere this, have made known the public opinion; it shall be my business to caution the queen against returning to this country; the state will provide generously for her comfort.”

The lawyer having as he thought, gained the purport of his errand, soon took his leave; whilst I endeavoured to believe that, had he remained until morning, I should have made him acquainted with the whole truth, and have stated the princess’s conduct in 1806, and also have shown him the letter forwarded to me from Philadelphia, in the latter end of 1807, which letter, to answer my own guilty purpose, I kept to myself, but which I shall now enclose as an additional proof of the queen’s innocence. Mr. B—— allowed no time, thought I, for this act of justice; and when I considered what examination of events, long passed and forgotten, must have followed

such a statment from me, and reflected on the consequence which must have resulted to myself that my artful plans would have been laid open to the king, and my dishonour published to the world—and that a sort of conspiracy would thus have been acknowledged to have existed against the queen, even prior to her landing, of which the royal family would appear as the instigatorsthese and similar reflections made me feel satisfied with the allusion I had given; had I acted differently, thought I, I might have brought the king's friends into a very awkward predicament; whereas, the present course will not endanger any one, nor injure the queen, since it is intended that she shall be rendered comfortable.

A few months intervened, when I met lord L—— at the house of a friend—he found an opportunity to thank me for the satisfactory intelligence which, through my means, he had received. “It has perfectly tranquillized me and my colleagues,” said lord L——, “without the knowledge of your ladyship's opinion, whose uniform attachment to the family on the throne has stood a test, we might have been over cautious in giving our advice on the queen's unexpected appearance in this country; we were certainly tenacious of forming our opinion from interested

reports, lest we might occasion irreparable injury to an exalted female, who naturally looks to the law for justice, and to its ministers for protection.—You, madam, have removed a weight from our minds, as we feel ourselves justified in advising the present mode of conduct, which nothing short of the basest depravity, in forcing her presence on her indulgent and amiable consort, could have induced his majesty to adopt. But there is a soothing balm to those, whose office obliges them to harsh measures, in knowing they are really acting with lenity; and we are wholly indebted to lady Guernsey for this valuable feeling.”

From that day I have sustained an accumulation of mental and bodily afflictions.

The daily papers have been read to me, from which I have learned the whole mass of evidence for and against the queen, and the system of persecution which has been practised, seems to have all originated with me! Shame, attending the confession of my guilty deceptions, has, hitherto, deterred me from bringing forward a statement of the truth. I feel it my duty to say to his gracious majesty, supposing your ladyship will perform my last request of showing this letter to our sovereign—“*I am the viper that has been secretly*

wounding you BOTH for the last five-and-twenty years ; I caused you to assume a cruelty of behaviour towards your consort, which was foreign to your nature. It was I who corrupted your heart —my insatiable vanity, which could not admit a partner in your affection, has ruined your character in the eyes of all good men ; you, whom God designed to be a kind and considerate father of your daughter, are regarded as a wretch delighting to punish the supposed disobedience of your children.”

To you, dearest lady Anne, I bequeath the power of making known the truth—and when you do so, remind the queen, that I shall then have rendered the fatal account where eternal punishment awaits the guilty ! Implore her, not to add one curse to my lengthened misery and, may the fact, that I shall have ceased to exist when this reaches you, excite in your bosom the spirit of forgiveness towards the memory of one, who, in her varied passage through life, thought it a high honour to subscribe herself, your ladyship’s friend.

The Countess of GUERNSEY.

A correct copy of the letter alluded to in page 39, and enclosed in the above packet.

Philadelphia, August 10, 1807.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF GUERNSEY.

MADAM—As an independent man, and, at this time, the resident of a free state, I take the opportunity of declaring to your ladyship, that I am the mysterious individual who lately lived near the mansion of the injured princess of Wales; injured, I fear, by me, who knew only her goodness, and her charities! Be pleased, madam, to say to that lady, that I can never cease to regret the having been, I beg to say unintentionally, the cause of one moment's uneasiness to her royal highness by having in my possession a miniature likeness of her royal highness. Doubtless, the persons, who so far trespassed on the rights of society as to force open my escrutoire, examined well its contents; in which case they must have seen the likenesses of each member of the royal family of England. I was, therefore, at a loss to guess why the resemblance of the princess of Wales, should have given umbrage, whilst the others were suffered to remain unnoticed—but, I have been since informed, that her enemies were seeking proofs of accusation against the princess,

and meant to adduce this as one. I earnestly solicit your ladyship to honour me with laying this letter before the prince of Wales. I beg to assure his royal highness that my person is wholly unknown to the princess, and that my sole occupation in England was the same which caused my companions, *Francois* and *Louis Meunier* to be arrested at Worcester, in the year 1793. I was, at that time, in London, and, gaining caution from their misfortune, I contrived, by various disguises, to pursue the object of my unwearied labour, free from suspicion, until the late circumstance attracted public notice, and compelled me, from prudential motives, having collected all the plans and sketches it was my business to obtain, to sail with the first vessel from London to this place.

I entreat, at your ladyship's hand, to lose no time in communicating this intelligence to the prince and princess of Wales. I hope to have it in my power to be more explicit; but, for the present, the interests of France demand, that I only subscribe myself, with profound respect,

A Citizen of the American Republic.

The Queen's Last Letter to the King.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR—Having read, with no uncommon interest, the “Confessions of the late Countess of Guernsey,” and being acquainted with an important fact, hitherto concealed, as well as having in my possession A LETTER, written by her late majesty, but never received by the illustrious personage to whom it was addressed, I herewith enclose them for insertion, conceiving yours to be decidedly the best channel for them to obtain that publicity which such a subject deserves. How I came possessed of the documents in question, and the causes that have hitherto prevented their being published, will, I am aware, be matter of curiosity to many; the time, however, is not yet arrived, when the disclosure of certain circumstances, connected with this apparently mysterious transaction, is either prudent or safe. You are, therefore, at liberty to print them, or return the packet, according to the address, as you may think most advisable; and am, sir,

Yours, &c.

A. H.

The Real Cause of the Queen's Death stated.

It is generally supposed that her majesty received her death-blow in the conduct adopted towards her on the memorable 19th of July, 1821; doubtless, the insults then offered her, stung the queen deeply; but she received a later and a more fatal wound in her repulse at Carlton palace. It will be remembered that, a short time previous to her majesty's death, a female was noticed about the precincts of that mansion, who, when asked her business, replied, she wished for an interview with the king. The servants chid her intrusion, and threatened the seizure of her person, should she continue to trouble them. Her majesty (*for it was the queen disguised*) finding she was supposed to be a lunatic, as a last effort, made an acknowledgment to the sentinel that she was his queen, and that her motive for seeking admission in that disguise, was, to present a petition to his royal master. The guard protested he dared not solicit her admission. She then requested he would himself be the bearer of her letter to his gracious majesty: he promised to do so; but this he merely did to satisfy her importunity, not with an intention to

fulfil his word, since he knew an attempt of the kind would draw upon him his dismissal from the service. Intending however, to act honestly, he did the only thing in his power—he took back the letter, which he gave to her faithful servant, a foreigner, and he, not well comprehending the matter, from his ignorance of the English language, said, when he returned it to his royal mistress, that “*a soldier had brought that from the palace.*” The unfortunate lady, supposing her letter had been presented to the king, and that he refused to look at it, manifested greater poignancy of feeling than she had done during her misfortunes. On receiving the letter, her majesty placed her hand on her heart, saying: “*Here ends my useless struggles:—he is deceived, and I must submit to the blow!*” The queen remained some time in her chamber, taking, it was thought, repose; but, on her re-appearance, her countenance indicated extreme mental suffering. That same evening (as must be in the recollection of the public) her majesty visited Drury-lane theatre; but from that hour, her words and actions showed she had done with the world, and that hope and fear were equally at rest! Her wrongs formed a weighty mass, to

which her thoughts naturally reverted, and she died as one to whom much was due, but whose charity forgave it all!

THE LETTER.

Brandenburgh House, July 29, 1821.

MY LIEGE AND HUSBAND!

Once more, and for the last time, I make my solemn appeal to your majesty for that justice which has hitherto been denied to me. My heart, torn with conflicting emotions, a prey to anguish and despair, would fain seek some repose from the troubles which have so long oppressed it, and pants for an opportunity to disburden itself of its load, before I descend into the silent grave. My gracious sovereign, I ask not for your love—I ask not even for your society. I wish to put no restraint upon your inclinations, nor to interfere with those pleasures which you feel indispensable to your happiness. Alas! too well I know that every artifice has been made use of to rivet the most unfavourable impressions in your breast, nor can I *now* even hope to see them wholly eradicated; but, oh!

have pity on my unmerited sufferings, and, for once, at least, allow a hopeless and disconsolate wife to make known her griefs to the rightful, though estranged partner of her bosom. Shall the honour of my father's house be sullied, because his child could find no one to protect her from the malice of her traducers? Shall it indeed be said, that the monarch of a mighty empire—born to rule and to be beloved—a man, pre-eminently gifted with intellect and nobleness of soul—suffered his passions so far to outrun his reason, as to believe in the most monstrous fictions that the tongue of slander ever invented?—False friends and open foes have alike contributed towards my destruction. A deep-laid system of deception has been unceasingly practising on us both; and too late, alas! have I discovered the machinations of my enemies. It is this discovery alone that now prompts me to make a last appeal to your royal breast. The information I have lately obtained lays open such a scene of depravity, such intrigues and perjuries, that I shudder not merely at the state to which they have reduced *me*, but to contemplate the extent of human wickedness, and the dreadful lengths to which the minions of a court will go, to obtain their unhallowed desires! Bred up under a tender mo-

then's eye, in my youth I knew no guile, and therefore suspected none; my heart was formed by nature for generous confidence and sympathising love; unpractised in the ways of deception myself, how could I think that there were beings base enough to spread their snares, like spiders' webs, and watch, with greedy eyes, for an opportunity of pouncing upon their prey?— Yet by such, alas! was I beset as soon as I reached this boasted land of freedom; and before I even had an opportunity of making myself acquainted with the ordinary customs of the country, the evenomed tongue of slander was busy in “filching from me my good name.” Little, indeed, did I suppose that, in this generous land, the *real* failings of a fellow-creature would be propagated with avidity—how then, could I be prepared to defend myself from *unfounded* calumnies! I had not then learnt that,—

“On eagles' wings immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born and die.”

Little did I suspect that the fearlessness of independence would ever be construed into unfeminine boldness; little did I imagine, that charitable actions could not be performed without some secret, guilty motive being attributed to them;

Little did I dream that I was doomed to be made the sport of party, and have every action of my life publicly discussed, and praised or censured, as best suited the views and interests of opposite factions. How then, could I, a stranger and a female, guard against the poisoned shafts of calumny, when neither strength, dexterity, nor the most cautious prudence can enable a man to protect himself, if so assailed? Had I *known* my secret enemies, perhaps I might have avoided them, and exposed their wiles; but I was surrounded and flattered by them, and taught to confide in them as my most devoted friends!

It was my peculiar misfortune to form a wrong estimate of the necessary qualifications for a female of distinguished rank to possess; had I exchanged my natural candour, openness, and love of innocent pastimes, for formal reserve, courtly etiquette, and dissimulation, those actions which resulted from an exuberance of sensibility, would never have appeared; and the malignant would have had no opportunity of torturing them into what they first termed *levities*, but which afterwards assumed the appellation of *indiscretions*; and at length were called *criminal indulgences*!—till I was in the end denounced as

a traitor to my sovereign, and faithless to my husband's bed!

Great, however, as my wrongs are; mercilessly as I have been persecuted; held up as I still am for the finger of scorn to point at, I forbear to recriminate; and would be content, were merely my own happiness concerned, to quit this world of sorrow without giving utterance to one word of reproach, gladly consigning the recollection of all my injuries to oblivion. But, oh, my husband! when I reflect on the depth of misery in which I have been plunged, and contrast it with the innocent enjoyments of my youth, or the high expectations I formed of happiness in becoming the wife of an enlightened and accomplished prince—when my mind reverts to that distressing moment, when the dear child of my bosom was unfeelingly torn from a mother's arms—when I look back at the many foul attempt, which were made to rob me of my honour and stab my peace of mind, till, dreading a foe in every countenance, I fled the country where I ought to have found friends and protectors, and sought an asylum among strangers—when, although seas divided me from my persecutors, their rancorous hate pursued me, and, encompassed by spies, I was hunted and ensnared even in my exile—

when the last hope of a disconsolate mother was bereft me, and I bowed to the dispensations of Providence in the loss of HER, whose life and happiness was far dearer to me than my own—when foreign courts were base enough to join the ranks of my enemies, and treat a defenceless and unoffending woman with every species of indignity—when the prayers of the church were denied me, and the underlings of power blasphemously declared, that the altar should not be polluted with the name of their queen—oh! when all these horrible and heart-rending recollections press on my mind, that spirit of fortitude, which has hitherto sustained me, sinks under the mighty load; my blood runs cold with horror; and I feel that the hour fast approaches when death must close my eyes, and put a period to my earthly sufferings.

My gracious sovereign! it is the guilty mind alone that can dread the approach of the last hour. The martyr in a righteous cause smiles at the engines of torture, and joyfully hails the moment that frees him from his persecutors; yet, with his dying lips, he prays to the throne of mercy, and, as he expires, imitates the language of HIM who died to atone for our transgressions; “Father! forgive them; for they know not what

they do." Yes, indeed, I feel that I can quit the scene of such countless woe without regret—nay, with calm tranquillity and delight; and, as regards myself,

"Cast not one longing, lingering look behind."

And when my soul takes her flight to the mansions of eternal bliss, I shall fervently pray, that mercy may be extended to those who knew not how to show mercy to me. For

"Of all the paths which lead to human bliss,
The most secure and grateful to our steps
With mercy and humanity is marked.—
And how much brighter is the wreath of glory,
When interwove with clemency and justice?"

I am not insensible of the value of the good opinion of the world; and far be it from me to despise the public voice, or to disregard the general feeling; but I scorn hypocrisy, and have no desire to be thought better than I am; nor would I, even now, humbled and degraded as I may appear in the estimation of my enemies, do an act derogatory to truth, honour, and justice, were it possible that by so doing I should gain the wealth of an empire, or be put in possession of those rights which I have so urgently, but fruitlessly, demanded at your hands!

Alas! alas! how can I hope to make known to you the secret cause of our mutual troubles, if an interview be not granted? how can I expect to convince *you*, who have so often shown that you are not open to conviction? Yet, with the proofs I now possess, I should do even your majesty an injustice, were I not to attempt to disclose those facts, which no other human being will ever dare to disclose. *My* mind is at peace with all the world, and nothing that can now happen can possibly destroy my inward serenity. Allow me, then, the gratification of pouring the balm of consolation (for *some* consolation *I can administer*) into that bosom, which, at times, must be a prey to anguish!

Should, however, my prayers and intreaties prove of no avail—should insult be added to . . . , and fresh calumnies be heaped on my guiltless head,—oh, may I still preserve my reason, and, with christian resignation learn to submit with patience to my fate! I have no selfish views to gratify; no ambitious motives stimulate my actions:—my whole life bears evidence, that neither pride nor vain-glory lurks within me; but I have a tender regard for the honour of the house of Brunswick, and with my latest breath shall I declare, that I never sullied that honour,

so gloriously maintained by the blood of my dearest kindred! And will it then be credited, that I could stoop to degrade the noble and generous English? (for they have, in spite of power and oppression, voluntarily testified their love for me.) Can it be believed, that a queen, who saw she reigned in the hearts of her people, would, by her own act, forfeit their good opinion of her? Can the most sceptical of the human race (not previously bent on my destruction,) in their conscience *believe*, that, if guilty of the crimes laid to my charge, I would rush, at the peril of my life, to confront my accusers, and that, too, at a time when my degradation was the high road to favour?—Such a doctrine is irreconcilable with common sense, and repugnant to human feelings.

And here allow me, my liege, to pay that grateful homage, which I so truly feel, to the great bulk of the British nation; nor think that, when I thus commemorate their generosity and attachment, I mean any disrespect to their sovereign. The people of England are, indeed, a loyal people; and their generous ardour in endeavouring to rescue a female from oppression, is perfectly consistent with the most exalted notions of loyalty and chivalric honour. May your majesty long

reign in their hearts, and may the state be guided by such counsels as shall best contribute to its welfare, and the happiness of those over whom you reign!

I shall pass over with a sigh the cruel repulse I met with on that gorgeous day which saw you crowned, because my wish is not to cast the slightest reproach; but I feel it a sacred duty, before I lay down my pen, to declare, that in that act I was guided by no advice opposite to my own inclinations; and it equally behoves me to declare, that, although I hold in the highest estimation the opinions of those devoted friends who have adhered to their persecuted queen, "through evil report and through good report," yet I have acted all along agreeable to the dictates of my own heart, and am alone accountable for every step I have taken. Should this letter, contrary to my expectation, ever be seen by the public, it will doubtless meet with the animadversions of those enemies, whom nothing short of my death will satisfy; for I have long since found, that, to such malignant beings, were my conduct proved to be

"Chaste as the icicle

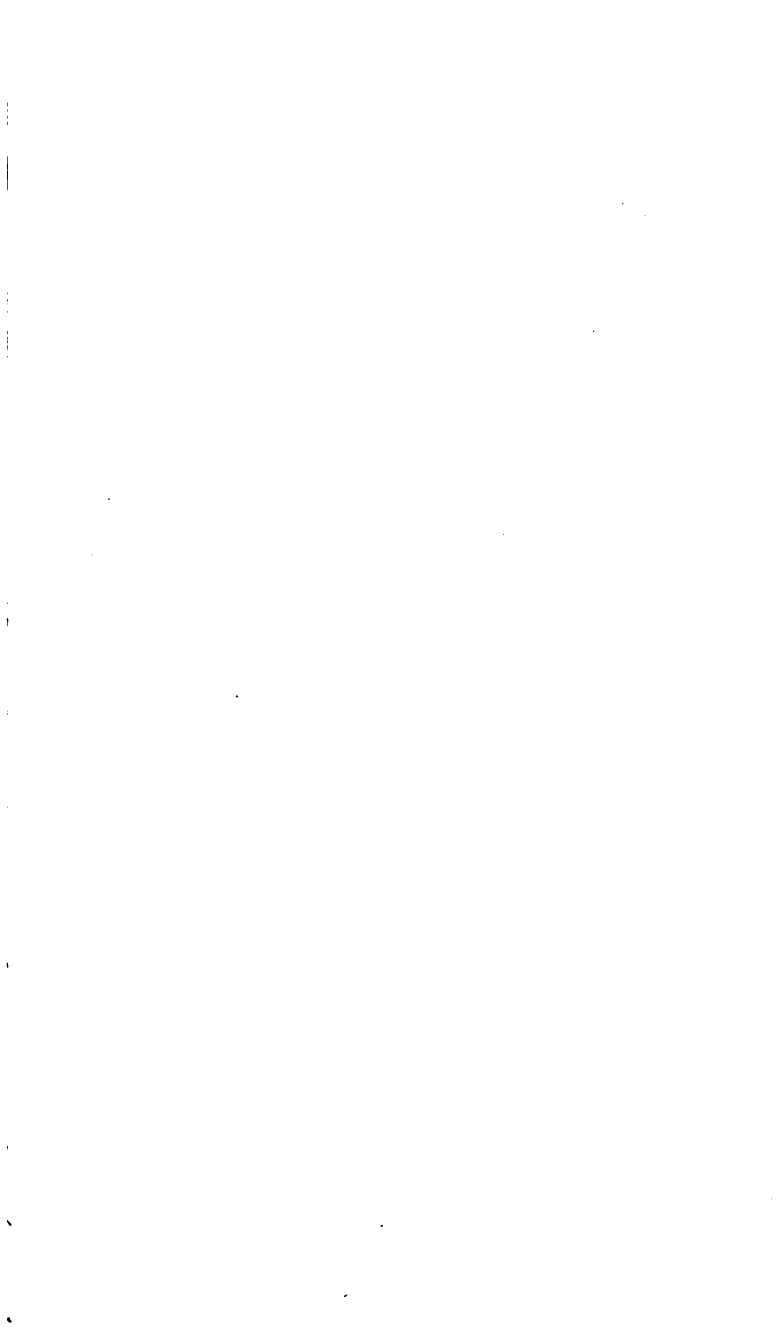
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,"

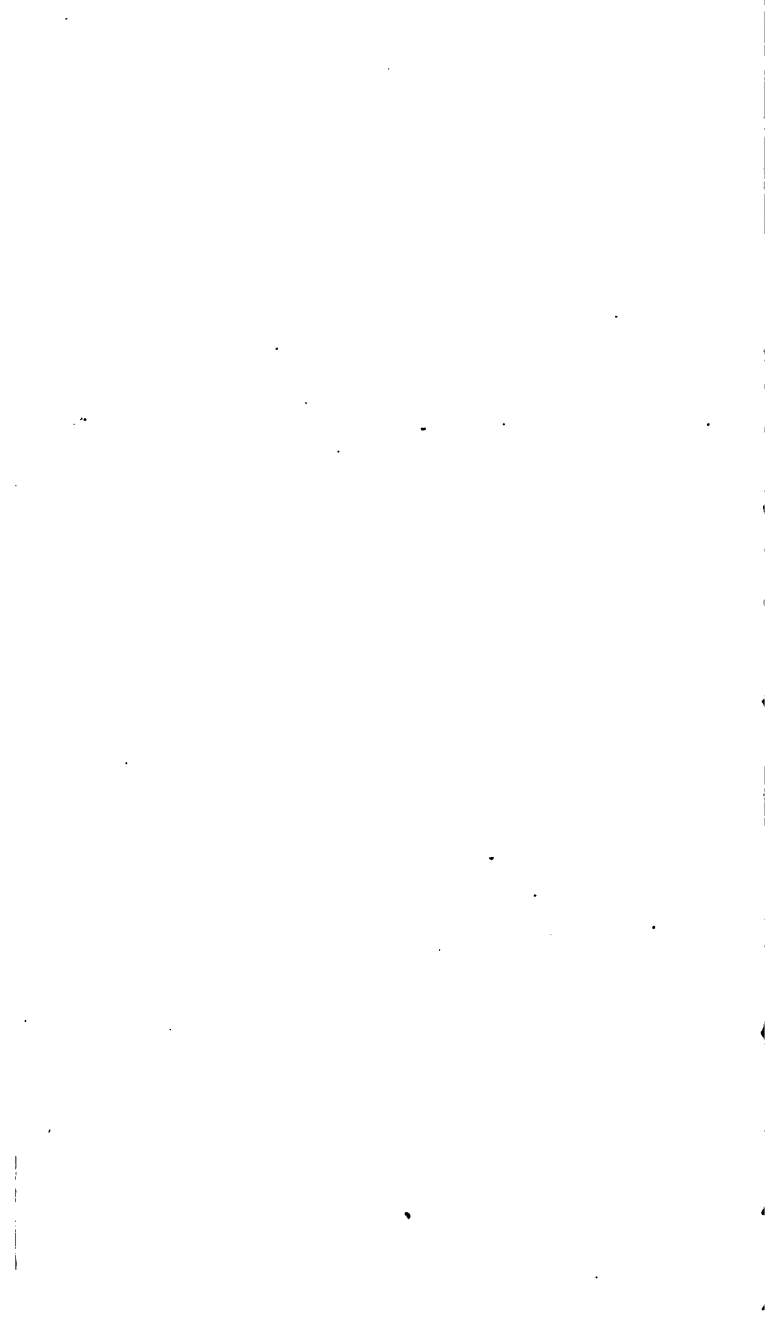
still they would discover spots of the deadliest hue, and strive, with renewed virulence, to blacken my reputation. But, although they neither feel compunction for the injuries they have done me, nor pity for my woes, I freely forgive them; well knowing that a day of retribution must overtake them; and that, however they may now triumph over my misfortunes, they cannot deprive me of my integrity and innocence, nor interpose between me and the righteous judge of heaven!

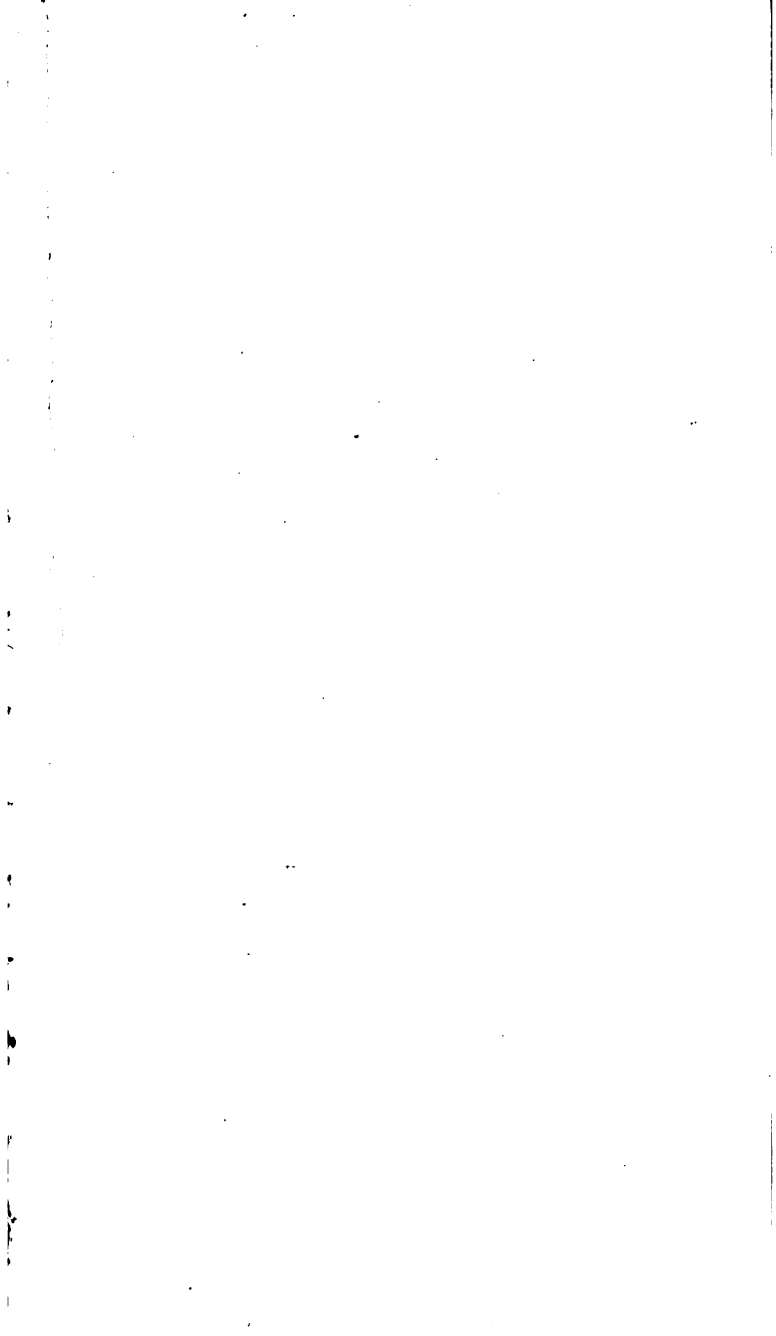
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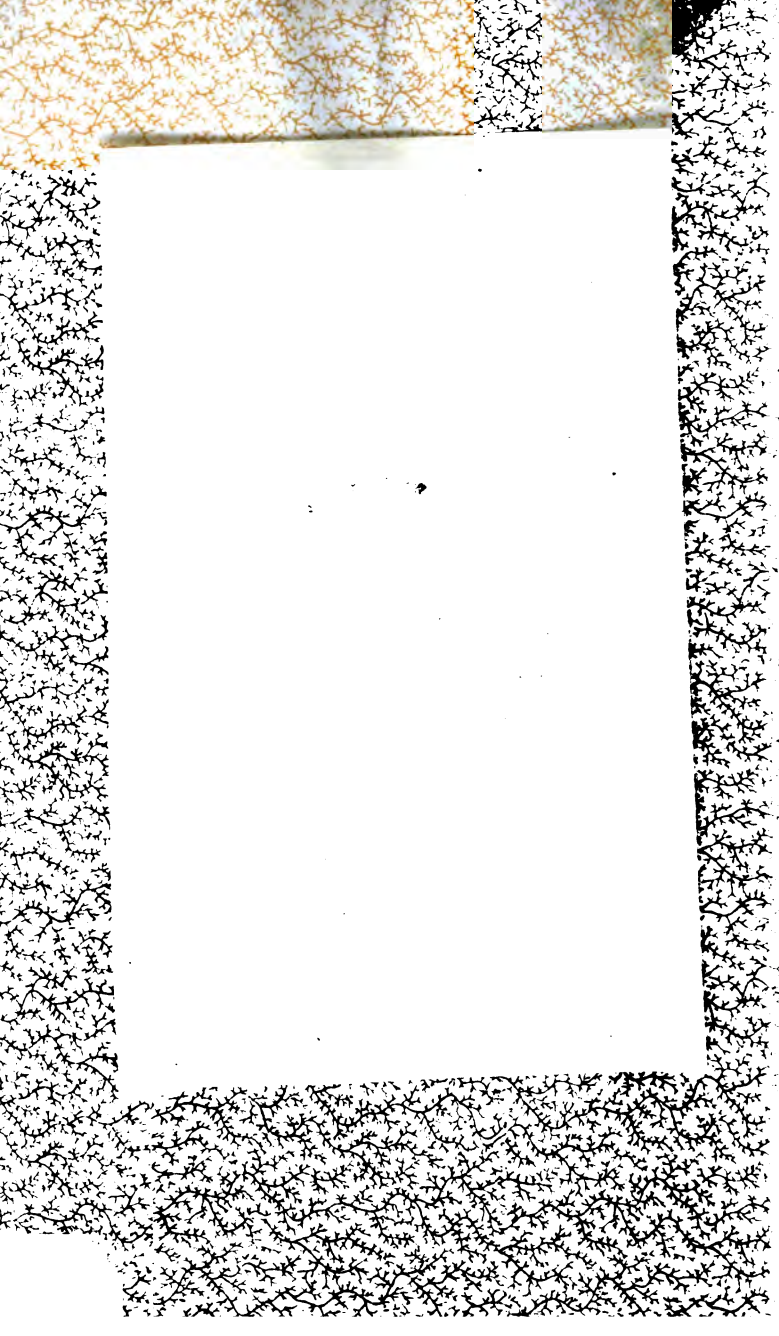
THE END.

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B'D DEC 28 1910



T. B. M. Mason.

